

the FELICIAN



The MAGAZINE of the FELICIAN SISTERS of NORTH AMERICA





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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, are 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. By the early 20th century, they had established 8 provinces across the United States and Canada. In 2009, they united the 8 provinces into Our Lady of Hope Province, allowing for a more strategic use of resources.

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

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An excerpt from "A Moment of Honesty"



Sr. Desiré is the Vocation Outreach Minister for Our Lady of Hope Province.

a post from the blog of Sr. Desiré Anne-Marie Findlay

Maybe we'll never arrive at the life we once had, but we'll arrive somewhere. The caterpillar doesn't know what's on the other side of its cocoon, and we don't know what's on the other side of ours — but if God's patterns reveal themselves time and again in nature, then coming undone completely means eventually we'll get to fly.

Follow "Religious Life for Beginners" at sistalogue.blogspot.com.

Stained glass created by Sr. Mary Ann Therese Kelly

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the Felician Sisters of North America twice yearly for our friends, benefactors, staff and leadership of our Felician ministries, and Felician Sisters throughout North America.

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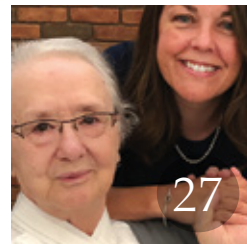


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Photo by Kate Buckley



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Dear Friends,



Challenging, unprecedented, tragic, uncertain – it seems we have run through the gamut of adjectives trying to describe these days that have been touched by COVID-19. Perhaps we have run through the gamut of emotions as well.

We have experienced frustration as the pandemic has interrupted our lives, but sometimes interruption can be an unexpected blessing. We have been forced to slow down, to adapt, to be creative and flexible. In many ways, **COVID-19 has forced us into a global reimagining of our world and our role in it.** It has made us place aside many things we saw as essential, try things we thought were impossible, and endure things we never knew we had the strength to survive.

We have also been reminded of the impact of our sisters and their ministries. There has been an outpouring of support in the form of donations, prayers, and words of support. Graduates of our schools, family members of those cared for by our sisters, those who have found counsel and spiritual direction with our sisters, and countless others have reached out with gratitude and respect to reaffirm that the time, love, and energy expended by our Sisters has made a difference in their lives.

As you will read in the pages that follow, the ministries founded and fueled by Felician Sisters have adapted – again – to the needs of the time, offering online academic and spiritual instruction, child care for essential workers, food for families who are struggling, and compassionate care for many others.

We also highlight many of our Sisters who work outside of the formally sponsored Felician ministries. They continue to serve in their parishes, diocesan offices, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, social service organizations, and more, refusing to let fear keep them from their ministries.

There is potential in the unknown, and so I ask that you embrace each new day and temper your anxiety with faith in divine providence.

Though we may be separated physically, we are united in our love of and hope in Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sister Mary Christopher Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sister Mary Christopher Moore, CSSF
Provincial Minister
Felician Sisters of North America
Our Lady of Hope Province

Felician Sisters and Ministries

STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

When COVID-19 began to take hold in the United States, many were deprived of everyday comforts, but for many more, their already severe living conditions were further exacerbated, shining a spotlight on the disparity in our country.

Refusing to let fear impede their service to others, the Felician Sisters and their ministries stepped up to the challenge, adapting to an ever-changing landscape to identify and meet the needs of their neighbors. Once again, the Felician Sisters and their ministries did what their foundress Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska called on them to do: "Serve where you are needed."

The following are just a few stories of our Felician Sisters and their ministries continuing to serve through the COVID-19 pandemic. They continue to find and serve on the frontiers of need, without bias and without fear, trusting always that God's providence will place them purposefully where they are needed.

Nobody Grieves Alone

Angela Hospice, located in Livonia, MI, offers more than just end-of-life care. They also offer comprehensive programming for guests and their families, including one-on-one counseling and bereavement support, both of which are free programs.

"Everyone feels the impact of grief at one time or another," said Debbie Vallandingham, Angela Hospice bereavement manager. "Coping with loss is something that you should

Angela Hospice Grief Support Team



never have to face alone. Angela Hospice provides free support to our hospice families and to the community at large."

When COVID-19 put a stop to in-person meetings, Angela Hospice moved their programming online. The wide variety of virtual support groups includes: *Beginning the Journey*, for those experiencing a recent loss; *Living with Grief*, a peer support group for those who have lost a loved one; *Left Behind: Survivors of Loss from Suicide or Overdose*, for people coping with the complex emotions that accompany the loss of a loved one; *Loss of a Spouse*; *Nobody Grieves Alone*, for those who have lost someone to COVID-19; and the *Virtual Music Therapy Group for Kids*.

"We've found our virtual groups and individual counseling sessions provide a comforting connection, even with the stress of COVID-19," Vallandingham said. "Although we can't be in the room with each other, we are truly able to connect through video or over the phone."

To learn more, visit angelahospice.org.



Stability in Uncertain Times

The Response to Love Center (RTL), in Buffalo, NY, under the leadership of Felician Sr. Mary Johnice Rzakiewicz, has remained open during the pandemic, providing prepared meals-to-go, prepackaged groceries, and other supplies, such as masks and hand sanitizer. Mike Gilhooly, assistant director of the Response to Love Center, said, "It has been important for us to be a stable food source for so many of our people that don't have much stability in their lives. Sr. Johnice has said, 'God is good. God is always with us. We need to be there for the people we serve as an example of how God and the Gospel come alive.'"

Only Food Pantry to Stay Open in Rio Rancho



Photo by Elliott Cramer

Early in the pandemic, **St. Felix Pantry** was the only food bank in Rio Rancho, NM, to remain open. In order to meet quarantine guidelines, they shifted to pre-packaged bags of groceries, and they found themselves serving 100-200 clients a day, in addition to the nearly 100 mobile pantry deliveries. They also partnered with the Mayor of Rio Rancho, Gregg Hull, and the police department to respond to the needs of senior citizens who were in social isolation due to COVID-19. According to Sr. Mary Angela Parkins, president and CEO, St. Felix Pantry has been able to remain open because of volunteers who are committed to serving the community in this time of crisis.

Disaster Relief Child Care Center

Like much of the country, in March, Michigan was placed under a Stay Home Stay Safe Executive Order due to COVID-19. All non-essential



businesses, including many child care centers, were closed, but many essential employees, such as those in health care, law enforcement, and critical infrastructure,

still needed child care services so they could continue to go to work and serve.

St. Mary Child Care Center (SMCCC) in Livonia worked with the State of Michigan to obtain a provisional license to operate as a Disaster Relief Child Care Center. As such, SMCCC was able to remain open to serve those most in need, giving them peace of mind that their children would be cared for while they comforted and healed the sick, kept the state safe, and provided essential services.

Program director Karen Mroczka said, **"Keeping the doors of St. Mary Child Care Center open to essential workers during this pandemic was our way of giving back to the community, to serve where needed, and to live out our core values."**

Zoom Prayer Time

In addition to teaching religion to her sixth-grade students at **Immaculate Conception School** in Spotswood, NJ, Sr. Marie Teresa Soltys, initiated an optional Zoom prayer time. "These are difficult days for all of us," Sr. Teresa observed, "especially for children. I want them to know that **I am here for them if they want to talk with me or pray with me. And I remind them that God, Jesus, and Mary are walking with us during these days.**"



Bringing Church to Residents

At **St. Anne Home** in Greensburg, PA, chaplain Father Liber Ortega brought the Eucharist to residents and employees. **"Since we cannot go to church, we are bringing the church to them,"** he said. He was accompanied by pastoral care associate Sr. Mary Michelle Shuda and director of mission services Sr. Mary Charlene Ozanick, who said, "Just as Jesus traveled throughout villages to heal people, so was our journey. The blessing was well received by everyone."

An Exceptional Prom



Switching to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging for every school, but imagine the additional stress for families of students with developmental differences, autism, and other special needs. When the **Felician School for Exceptional Children**, in Lodi, NJ, transitioned to online learning, they faced many challenges, including finding ways to provide special education support services that are traditionally hands-on. The faculty and staff also recognized the importance of social milestones the students would be missing.

“So many events were being canceled,” said Danielle Savastano, CESP, AP coordinator and SLE coordinator at the Felician School. “So many things were changed. Our students were handling everything with such grace and maturity. We were and are so proud of them! We just wanted to celebrate some of these milestones with them if we could.”

Unwilling to forgo the 25-year-old tradition of prom, the school came up with a virtual solution. Savastano recruited music therapist Vinnie Giaquinto as the DJ, and they got to work.

Using Zoom, Savastano and her dedicated crew created a virtual prom experience for both students and alumni that included music, lights, dancing, and the crowing of a prom

king and queen: Giovanni Egoavil and Faith Decker.

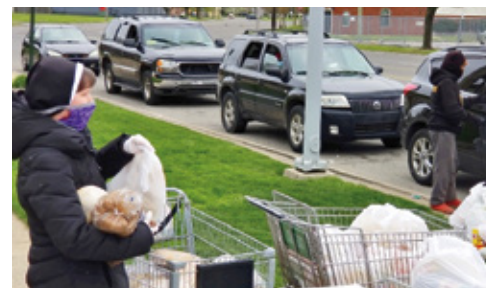
“The students and alumni were thrilled that they were able to attend! Some came dressed up and danced, some came and just watched, some were there with their families, but everyone was happy to see each other,” said Savastano.

The tradition of prom at the Felician School was instituted by Felician Sr. Mary Ramona Borkowski, who founded the school in 1971. Many of the students were struggling with the loss of Sr. Ramona during the COVID-19 pandemic — she passed away on April 18, 2020 — so the school decided to dedicate the prom to her memory.

“Sr. Ramona always put ‘her kids’ and staff first and loved to treat them to celebrations and treats,” said Savastano. “This was just one more way to keep her with us.”

Former student Thomas Martins was also remembered at the prom. Martins, who died earlier this year at age 30 from COVID-19 and lost several family members to the virus as well, loved to dance, making the prom an appropriate place to honor him.

By all accounts the virtual prom was a success, and a virtual graduation ceremony followed soon after.



Serving at the Curb

In Detroit, the Sisters of **Deo Gratias Ministries** had to shut down their recently opened café where they welcomed neighbors to share snacks, beverages and companionship. Unable to invite guests in, they took to the curb and began a drive-up food distribution. Two days a week, they stood on Seven Mile Road in the East Side of Detroit with shopping carts full of bagged food, masks and other necessities.

“We didn’t want to not engage in ministry out of fear,” Sr. Shelley Marie Jeffrey, co-director of Deo Gratias Ministries, told a reporter from WDIV Local 4 in Detroit. “We trust that God will take care of us.”

May Crowning

Felician Sisters and Immaculate Conception High School alumni Sr. Mary Bridget Becker ‘63, Sr. Janet Marie Kurgan ‘65, and Sr. Mary Joellen Zajac ‘66, kept tradition alive by crowning the Blessed Mother at the Peace Site on behalf of the ICHS Senior Class of 2020.





Preparing for COVID-19 in Haiti

As COVID-19 spread across the world, the Sisters at *Felician Mission: Haiti* prepared for its arrival in Jacmel. They purchased special water buckets with valves and filters and distributed them to the families they serve. **“With nearly 70% of our families not having access to clean water, it was important for them to be able to wash their hands to**

prevent the virus from spreading,” said Sr. Marilyn Marie Minter.

The Sisters also sewed face masks and gowns to make sure that they and the staff of the mobile clinic were protected. With the hospitals closed for a time, they were the only source of medical care.

Support *Felician Mission: Haiti* by visiting feliciansistershaiti.com.

The Spirit of Blessed Angela Inspires

Calls requesting assistance from the **St. Turibius Food Pantry** in Chicago, IL, have escalated over the past several months. In response, the Sisters and lay members of the St. Turibius St. Vincent DePaul Society are working to ensure that the needs of the people in crisis are being met. According to Felician Sr. Mary Beth Bromer, the annual Easter food distribution served more than 200 families, providing food, grocery store gift cards, personal hygiene items, and cleaning supplies.

The Felician Sister Vincentians — Sr. Mary Beth Bromer, Sr. Mary Francine Lagocki, Sr. Mary Eunice Olbrantz, Sr. Mary Barbara Ann Bosch, and Sr. Mary Eliana Remiszewski — continue to be overwhelmed by the generosity of the parishioners who frequently ring the doorbell of the convent to leave donations for the St. Turibius Food Pantry. Sr. Mary Beth said, **“The goodness of others in this unprecedented time of crisis is proof that even though the church buildings are closed, the Church is not!”**



Serving the Homeless in Toronto

With COVID-19 protocols in place, **St. Felix Centre** in Toronto, ON, Canada, has continued to welcome guests at its drop-in and 24-hour respite sites and offer take-away meals. They have also installed a hand-washing station outside of the facility and provided masks and sanitizer to their guests.

Recently a guest of St. Felix Centre left behind a simple note saying, **“Thank you for saving our lives.”**





Raising Spirits

In order to combat feelings of isolation, the staff of *Villa St. Francis* in Milwaukee, WI, organized activities to keep the residents actively engaged while also keeping them socially distanced and safe. Hallway bowling was one of the more popular games among the residents.



"Burning Love" of Elvis finds a way

Senior residents at Felician Village were "All Shook Up" at the thought of canceling their annual Elvis concert because of COVID. Instead, Elvis arrived in style, performed outdoors and was broadcast on the closed-circuit TV system. The "Kentucky Rain" held off and it was pure sunshine in Manitowoc, WI.

Acts of Kindness

When talking about the contributions of the Felician Sisters during the pandemic, the many prayers, letters of encouragement, and other acts of kindness must not be overlooked. Always seeking new ways to help, Sisters throughout North America got creative and put their talents to work, sewing masks, baking cookies, or assembling meals. They also had meals sent to first responders, distributed bagged lunches to soup kitchens, and made signs to express their appreciation of employees and volunteers.



The Power of Prayer

You are not alone during these challenging times. The Felician Sisters across the continent are praying for you and for healing in our world.



Civil rights leaders lead the 1963 March on Washington. AFP / Getty Images



WHY WE STAND

In the midst of a pandemic and all of the changes it has brought to our lives, we have once again been reminded of racial injustices that continue to permeate our society. Though some have distracted us from the true purpose of the protests of racial injustice with acts of violence and vandalism, our Sisters have joined those who peacefully and prayerfully protest any behavior or policy that denies the dignity of any child of God.

We have been called to examine our own hearts and to find within ourselves an honest recognition of our own prejudices and blind spots. We have been called to speak out against hatred, violence, and the animosity that divides us, and we are answering that call.

In the spirit of our beloved Foundress Blessed Mary Angela, we strive to serve as instruments of justice and peace, working on behalf of all God's people who are victims of injustice and violence today. The work of justice and peace is integral to who we are and inherent in our charism, vision, and mission. We stand with and advocate for those who have been crying out — those experiencing poverty, marginalization, oppression, and inequity — to help restore the human dignity and rights of all God's people.

To learn more about the efforts of the Felician Sisters to advocate for justice and peace, visit our website at www.feliciansistersna.org/socialjustice.

Kingstree, South Carolina, 'No Place for Racial Bigotry'

By Sr. Mary Susanne Dzedzic
Felician Center Director



The Felician Sisters joined members of the Kingstree community at the June 27 gathering against racism that led them to the Kingstree Courthouse.

Recently, a disturbing incident occurred in our town of Kingstree, SC. A Caucasian local business owner used the “N” word toward an African-American woman, not knowing his phone was left on for her to hear. Understandably, the woman was very upset and reported the hateful incident to local officials.

Though the woman was deeply hurt by the use of the “N” word, she appealed to the community to pray and come together as a town not separate in color.

Senator Ronnie Sabb said the word only brings back the horror of the past. “When the word is used, it’s simply not a word that falls on deaf ears. It is a word that brings about emotions that, needless to say, are more than unpleasant,” he said, adding that this is an opportunity to come together to speak with one voice that there is no place here for racial bigotry.

Senator Sabb invited the community to meet on June 27 outside the courthouse. “There is an opportunity to say that’s not who we are,” he said.

Public attendees were encouraged to wear masks, to socially distance, to peacefully protest, and to denounce racism.

There was no question that Sr. Mary Carol Piskor, Sr. Mary Johnna Ciezobka, and I would participate. We each carried a sign saying, “Hate Has No Home Here.”

There was some anxiety and fear, for we all know such events can be unpredictable, but on Saturday, June 27, there was much peace and joy as hundreds gathered together of all ages, faiths, and colors to unite in the cause. There were prayers prayed and speeches made. There were songs sung and words of solidarity, forgiveness, peace, and support spoken.

We were especially proud to see several Felician Center board members as well as our legal counsel, volunteers and staff, families, and children of the Learning Center from the past and the present participate.

Perhaps this event, and ones like it, will get us one step closer to healing a world in need of acceptance, peace, and love. ❁

THE FELICIAN CENTER is a ministry of the Felician Sisters of North America serving the community of Kingstree, SC. To learn more, visit their website at feliciancentersc.org.

I Don't See Color

By Sr. Desiré Anne-Marie Findlay
Vocation Outreach Minister

“I don't see color.” Is that so?

I know I don't speak for all people of color, but for myself and many others, this statement is not consoling. When you tell me you don't see my color, is it because I am invisible to you? Or is it because you would rather not see what makes us different?

I have no problem with my skin color nor do I have a problem with being different. The danger of desiring sameness is that people often mistake sameness for unity. We don't have to be the same to be united. Celebrating diversity is much more beneficial than trying to pretend it doesn't exist.

I realize that some people will say they don't see my color as a way of saying they see beyond the color of my skin. I get it. But I still don't find it comforting. Here's why: my color is part of what makes me

who I am. It has shaped my experiences in this world and therefore has shaped my ways of understanding myself and the world. It has also pushed me to be more courageous and outspoken on matters of injustice.

I want you to see my heart, but I also want you to see my color — it contains layers of beautiful cultures that I inherited from my ancestors. I am proud of where

I come from and of the people who created the skin tone I now wear. I have roots in Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, the Indigenous Americas and Spain. Just as I am proud to be a woman — and to have a heart that loves with a feminine strength — so too does my heart pound with the strength of those who came before me. Why would I deny my heritage, or let anyone else deny it?

I also want you to see my color because there are so many ways that the American culture tries to stomp it out or push it down.

As a dancer, I regularly had to buy make-up and clothing for performances. I didn't notice until I was a young adult that the color described as “nude” was a problem. This “color” didn't match my nude, but

somehow it was the default. So what did this say to me in the world of dance and beauty? As a woman with darker skin, the message was clear: “Your color doesn't belong here.” That created a problem not just for the way I saw myself, but for the way others would see me. What do you think that says to little girls and young women who are “white”? It tells them they are the default, the preferred, that they belong. But it also says that anyone who isn't like them doesn't belong. This is how racist attitudes are born without it even being taught at home. So unless parents are actually attentive to things like that and discuss it with their children, the idea of “I belong, but other colors don't” remains the norm.

Think about other labels, too. I use the term “African-American” because that's the blanket term used to describe anyone who's black and born in America. But that leaves out other parts of me that are equally as important. In addition, have you ever noticed that people of European descent don't have to check off boxes on official forms that say “Polish-American” or “German-American”? Why not? Why does their box just say “white”? To me terms like “African-American” or “Asian-American”

(continued)

Photo of peaceful protesters by Kate Buckley



■ JUSTICE & PEACE

are terms used to label others as if to say, “You don’t belong. You are not from here. You are only part American.” Just a gentle reminder: most of us are not from here. So why not call out ALL of us who originated from somewhere else?

This brings me to reflect on two concepts that I’ve recently learned about: racism as America’s original sin, and the fact that race doesn’t even exist.

The best I can do to explain these concepts is to refer to racepowerofanillusion.org where you can find an interview with Audrey Smedley, author of *Race in North America: Origins of a Worldview*. In the interview, Smedley speaks of the greed on which America was built, as well as the reason behind separating Irish indentured servants and African slaves who had once lived together harmoniously without the need to differentiate between “race.” Essentially, Smedley explains how race was created as a way to keep power in the hands of some and out of the hands of others.

I invite you to read the previously mentioned article in order to gain a deeper understanding of race and racism — of how race was created and why, and how it leads to the ways in which we see each other now. What I wish to say about how others might see me is that I do not have a problem with the color of my skin. What makes me angry is the idea that to some, the color of my skin is a problem. So the next time you walk past a group of black teenagers, pay attention to where your mind goes. Does it go there when you walk past a group of white teenagers? Or when you see a black woman upset about the way she or her loved ones are being treated, must she be stereotyped as an angry black woman? Or can she be allowed to stand up for herself and others?

It’s all about paying attention. Pay attention to how people of color are portrayed in movies, the news, etc., because what we see shapes our way of thinking whether we realize it or not. As long as we pay attention, we are able to see not beyond the color, but beyond the prejudices and stereotypes about the color.

This is why representation matters. To see myself represented in a positive light — such as in sacred art featuring people with various cultural backgrounds — it says to me, “You can achieve this. You can be holy, good, worthy. You can be a leader.” Not only that, but for people of all colors to be represented in images of holiness and authority says to each of us, “People who are different than me can achieve this, too. They can be holy, good, worthy. They can be leaders.”

The way I see myself is important. But the way we see others is what changes the world. 🌸

Sr. Desiré Anne-Marie Findlay

professed her perpetual vows to the Felician Sisters on Aug. 15, 2019. She currently serves as the vocation outreach minister for Our Lady of Hope Province. You can follow Sr. Desiré’s blog at sistalogue.blogspot.com.



Mooncrest Neighborhood Program Celebrates Graduate

Photography by Elliott Cramer

This spring, staff and volunteers at the Mooncrest Neighborhood Program in Moon Township, PA, celebrated a major milestone with one of their neighbors. At the age of 21, after having come to the U.S. as an asylum seeker, struggling with language barriers, and becoming a first-time mother, **Sindy Niz Juarez** received her high school diploma.

About four years ago, at the age of 17, Sindy left her home in Guatemala to seek asylum in the United States. She came in search of a better education. Back home, she had to walk an hour and a half each way to school. She was determined to finish, but there were few opportunities in her community even for those who had earned degrees. Despite their education, many ended up working hourly-wage jobs.

Sindy's aunt, who lives in Delaware, promised that if she came to live with her, she would be able to focus on her studies. Excited by the prospect of a quality education, she made the journey, but when she arrived in Delaware, her aunt quickly put her to work, leaving little time to study.

Despite this, Sindy did her best to continue her education. When her fiancé's job transferred him to Pittsburgh, he asked her to come with him, but she was concerned that her studies would suffer. He assured her, however, that her education would be a priority. "You are the one raising us up," he told me."

In Guatemala, Sindy had completed the 9th grade, but because of her age, Moon Area High School placed her in the 11th grade. She struggled with the classwork, having to translate her textbooks just to be able to read the assignments, and she was on a tight deadline. She needed to finish her classwork by May 2020 or she would only be able to obtain her GED, not a diploma.

When Sindy came to the Mooncrest Neighborhood Program for help, she found it in volunteer **Maria Vergara Esquivel**.

"What impresses me most about Sindy is that she is willing to put in the hours and hard work no matter what obstacles come up," said Esquivel. "Her humility, thankfulness and dedication are always present."

When Sindy's daughter was born about a year later, she didn't slow down. In fact, she was more determined than ever to receive her high school diploma. "I want to be a role model for my daughter," she said. "I will always support her, so she can be what she wants to be."



mastered her academic work has been heart-warming and inspiring."

Since graduation, Sindy has gone from being a

volunteer at Mooncrest to an employee. She now tutors children and works to give them the opportunities she has been afforded. As she juggles work, motherhood and working with her attorney toward obtaining citizenship, this amazing young woman continues to carve out her future. With her high school diploma in hand, she plans to take courses at the community college toward a degree in nursing or education. ✨



In June, Sindy graduated and received her diploma. She donned her cap and gown and celebrated with her Mooncrest family, who were not surprised that this determined young woman had realized her dream.

"Sindy's motivation to succeed brought her to us," said Nancy Lawry, executive director of the Mooncrest Neighborhood Programs. "She knew what she needed to do to succeed and was willing to work hard to achieve her goals. Watching Sindy develop confidence as a new mom and seeing her confidence grow as she

The **MOONCREST NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM** is a ministry of the Felician Sisters of North America located in Moon Township, PA. They offer community services such as an after school program, remote learning support, adult education, access to a mobile clinic, food resources, and social services referrals. Learn more at mooncrest.org.





Contributions of Sisters **SERVING BEYOND** Felician Ministries

Many do not realize the rich diversity of ways in which the Felician Sisters of North America live out their mission through ministry. While we often highlight the work of our Sisters in ministries directly sponsored by the Felician Sisters, many more serve in parishes, dioceses, schools, hospitals, prisons, counseling centers, food banks, and other organizations across the continent.

Some of the Sisters listed on the following pages have been in their positions for more than 30 years; others less than a year. Some are still serving at the ministry they founded; others are building new ministries. Some who spent years in education, child care or health care have reinvented themselves. They remain relevant and continue to make an impact because they refuse to be stagnant. As the needs of society change, the Felician Sisters evolve to meet those needs, and embracing those changes has allowed them to continue to be a compassionate presence on the frontiers of need.

On the following pages, read about
Felician Sisters who serve beyond Felician Ministries in:

- HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL SERVICES ■ EDUCATION & CHILD CARE
- SPIRITUAL DIRECTION
- DIOCESAN MINISTRIES ■ PARISH MINISTRIES



Sr. KIM MARIE MIS

STANDING WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES & CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Providing support services to students in Chicago's inner-city parochial schools is a tall order — but **United Stand** has been filling that order for 30 years with Sr. Kim Marie at the helm.

Photography by Elliott Cramer

While working at St. Joseph High School in Chicago, IL, in the 1980s, Felician Sister Kim Marie Mis recognized the need for academic, behavioral, and psychological support for students in Catholic schools. Collaborating with development director Mary Lou Cragg, she wrote a grant, and in 1987, United Stand was born.

One of the biggest hurdles for many families looking for support for their children is the cost associated with obtaining a diagnosis, which is needed to qualify for services. Fees can be \$2,000 to \$3,500, far beyond many families' reach. United Stand, however, provides diagnostic testing at an average cost of about \$250.

Today, United Stand supports approximately 100 Chicago-area Catholic schools in developing programs to serve students with a range of special needs. In order to utilize funding from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), each student must be tested and found eligible for services.

Dr. Crystal Johnson, a licensed clinical psychologist and

registered play therapist, serves as director of one of the three Centers for Inclusive Education operated by United Stand, which provide testing for students. "We try to figure out if there is a learning disability that is hindering their learning progress," she said. "You really want to determine why they can't pay attention, whether it is physiological or perhaps stemming from an event in the child's life, such as a divorce." United Stand has a battery of 100 different tools to pinpoint a diagnosis.

The growth in the number of students on the autism spectrum who are now able to be served in a Catholic school has been encouraging according to Leah Duszynski, director of inclusive education for the Office of Catholic Schools. "Imagine being able to send your child who is on the spectrum to a Catholic school; it's extraordinary," she said.

Visitation Catholic School, which has 10 teaching staff and five support staff for their 120 students, works closely with Miram Munoz, its United Stand site supervisor. Principal Jenna Markoff said, "On a larger level,

they are supporting teachers in assisting students within the classrooms, helping the students learn and be comfortable here."

At St. Nicholas of Tolentine School, principal Dr. Mariagnes Menden said, **"Sr. Kim has been instrumental in helping us to begin inclusion in our school." Menden said that word is out that St. Nick can teach students on the autism spectrum, and teachers have become more confident that they can meet the students' needs.**



"We really have a belief that all are welcome; it's embedded in the Catholic social teaching of our church, and the sacredness of that. For any family that wants a Catholic education for their child, we want to be able to offer that," Menden said. United Stand makes that possible. 🌸

More Felician Sisters in HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL SERVICES

HEALTH CARE

Sr. Mary Andréa Chudzik

- Mission Assistant

St. Mary's Hospital and
Good Samaritan Regional Health Center
Centralia, IL

Sr. Barbara Theresa Marie Martis

- Utilization Review Manager

St. Joseph Hospital
Bangor, ME

Sr. Mary Beatrice Knipple

- Eucharistic Minister

St. Francis Hospital
Milwaukee, WI

Sr. Christina Marie Holding

- Certified Wound Ostomy Nurse

St. Francis Hospital
Milwaukee, WI

Sr. Mary Edith St. Jean

- Patient Family Liaison

St. Joseph Hospital
Bangor, ME

Sr. Jacqueline Mary Kazanowski

- Eucharistic Minister

Mount Carmel Rehabilitation
and Nursing Center
Manchester, NH

Sr. Mary Marcine Borowiak

- Volunteer

Sisters of Charity Hospital
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Melanie Marie Bajorek

- Volunteer Chaplain with
the Palliative Care Team

Allegheny General Hospital
Pittsburgh, PA

Sr. Mary Michael Gurgone

- Mission Assistant

St. Mary's Hospital and
Good Samaritan Regional Health Center
Centralia, IL

Sr. Mary Michaeleen Pardowsky

- Pastoral Care Assistant

St. Mary's Hospital
Centralia, IL

Sr. Mary Modesta Piwowar

- Founder, No One Dies Alone Program

St. Mary Mercy Hospital
Livonia, MI

Sr. Mary Monica Szczepkowski

- Human Resources Assistant

St. Mary's Hospital
Centralia, IL

Sr. Patricia Marie Iagrosso

- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Resident Care

St. Joseph's Residence
Enfield, CT

Sr. Mary Ramona Dombrowski

- Eucharistic Minister

St. Francis Hospital
Milwaukee, WI

SOCIAL SERVICES

Sr. Angela Marie Ybarra

- Therapist
- Licensed Social Worker

A Child's Voice
Albuquerque, NM

Sr. Mary Catherine Raczkowski

- Client Assistant

Response to Love Center
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary DeLourdes Macurak

- Manager

Leo Meyer Manor
McKees Rocks, PA

Sr. Mary Denise Bernas

- Substitute Manager

Volunteer Director
Leo Meyer Manor
McKees Rocks, PA

Sr. Felicity Marie Madigan

- Co-Director

Deo Gratias Ministries
Detroit, MI

Sr. Mary Francis Lewandowski

- Volunteer

Deo Gratias Ministries
Detroit, MI

Sr. Jane Marie Lebiezinski

- Volunteer

Angel Haven and
Appalachian Project
Livonia, MI

Sr. Mary Joanne Baradziej

- Volunteer/Crafts Projects

Good Shepherd Venture Center
Hamilton, ON, Canada

Sr. Mary Johnice Rzadkiewicz

- Executive Director

Response to Love Center
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary Jozetta Prondzinski

- Art Instructor

Portage Park Senior Center and
Summit Senior Residence
Chicago and Park Ridge, IL

Sr. Mary Lea Malak

- Phone Ministry

Mercy Home for Boys & Girls
Chicago, IL

Sr. Mary Lenore Omernik

- Phone Ministry

Mercy Home for Boys & Girls
Chicago, IL

Sr. Maria Lorena Arvizu Zambrano

- Aide
- Private Home Child Care

Jardin de los Niños
Las Cruces, NM

Sr. Mary Lorene Pivinski

- Director of Education

Center for New Americans and
St. Joseph Parish
West Park, NY; New Paltz, NY

Sr. Maria Louise Edwards

- Volunteer

Águilas del Desierto
Riverside, CA

"Many migrants who attempt to cross the desert are families, women and children escaping violence, corruption, gangs and poverty."

The Águilas organize search and rescue missions for distressed migrants in the Arizona desert near the Mexican-American border. This year they have rescued 18 people and recovered the bodies of 14 people (as of late July 2020).

Learn more at aguilasdeldesierto.org.



Sr. Mary Lourdine Lachowski

- Phone Ministry

Mercy Home for Boys & Girls
Chicago, IL

Sr. Margaret Mary Eder

- Child and Family Counselor

United Stand
Chicago, IL

Sr. Marilyn Mason

- Administrative Director

United Stand
Chicago, IL

Sr. Mary Rose Szymanski

- Food Pantry
- Intake Coordinator

Response to Love Center
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary RoseAnita Ramirez

- Child and Family Counselor

United Stand
Chicago, IL

Sr. Shelley Marie Jeffrey

- Co-Director

Deo Gratias Ministries
Detroit, MI

Sr. Mary Theresann Zywicki

- Volunteer
- Seamstress

Angel Haven and
Appalachian Project
Livonia, MI

Sr. Mary Virginia Sztorc

- Supply Volunteer

Port Ministries
Chicago, IL



Sr. JULIANNA FRANCIS MARIE VAGNOZZI ENSURING THE LEGACY OF HER ALMA MATER

Sr. Julianna keeps the Felician spirit alive in the school where she found her voice and her vocation.

Sr. Julianna Francis Marie Vagnozzi is both a product of and an asset to Pomona Catholic School in Pomona, CA. As a 1974 graduate of Pomona Catholic, she knows firsthand the quality of the education students receive there, a valuable perspective that fuels her ministry in the development office as the coordinator of alumni outreach.

In 1948, when Rev. Thomas J. English decided to open a Catholic high school in Pomona, CA, he called on the Felician Sisters in Chicago, IL, to staff it. By 1957, the school was bursting at the seams with 750 students. The archdiocese opened a boys' school to alleviate the overcrowding, and the last co-ed class graduated in 1962. In 2011, they brought boys back to campus with the opening of a co-ed middle school, and in 2019, the two schools merged as Pomona Catholic School.

Pomona Catholic serves a large geographic range and includes students from three counties, including Los Angeles, making it, in the words of Sr. Julianna, "a wonderful oasis... word on the street is that Pomona Catholic is the safe place to be."

With 75% of students in need of financial assistance, Sr. Julianna is in tune with the needs of her students. She recalls discovering that two brothers who were frequently out of uniform were sharing a pair of dress shoes which are required for Mass. The school reached out to their mother and found out that she had just moved her family into transitional housing, but they were still struggling. Sr. Julianna connected the family with the Angela Spirituality Center, another Felician ministry in Pomona, which provided them with shoes, food, clothing, and Christmas gifts. The school's efforts were recognized by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles-San Gabriel Region, which honored them with an Angel Award. More importantly, the two boys are now in high school and thriving.

Pomona Catholic boasts a 100% graduation rate and a 100%

college acceptance rate; 98% of those students attend college. One reason for this could be the supportive "family" environment, which Sr. Julianna credits with helping her find her own voice.

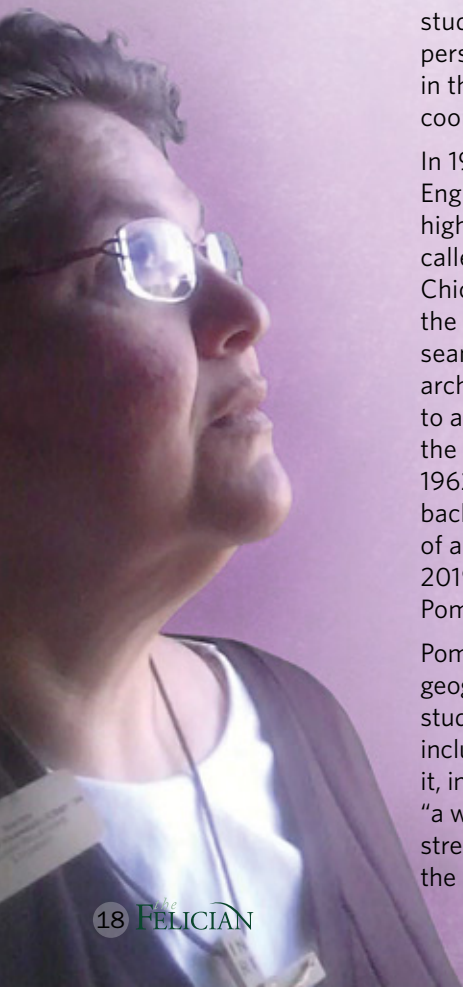
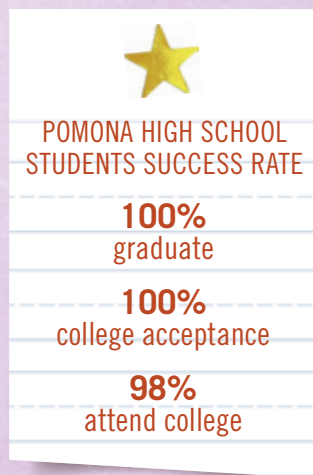
"I began my freshman year afraid to speak because of a stutter," said Sr. Julianna. "The love and acceptance of the sisters helped me overcome that." In finding her voice, she also found her vocation: "While rehearsing for the glee club's spring showcase, I heard

God's call to be a Felician backstage in the auditorium in front of the stained-glass window. It is my favorite place in the whole school!"

The obvious love Sr. Julianna has for Pomona Catholic is a true asset to her work in the development office. According to Navy Phay, director of development and institutional

advancement, **"Sr. Julianna has brought an infectious spirit. She revived our alumni program. The outreach and events that she hosts remind alumni of the great impact of their investments in our school and our students."**

Funds are necessary to help support the nearly 75% of students who receive financial assistance.



"We want to give a Pomona Catholic education to anyone who wants one," said Sr. Julianna. "If they can't afford tuition, we find a way."

With a sincere belief in the transformative potential of a Pomona Catholic education, Sr. Julianna works tirelessly to ensure the legacy of her alma mater. "We want to give our students every chance to earn their diploma and move on to the next step," said Sr. Julianna. "We give our students the tools they need to go on to college, to become tomorrow's

leaders. In some cases, they will be the first in their family to ever graduate from high school, to ever go to college. **We help them to break the cycle of poverty and hopelessness that they have known."**

Sr. Julianna certainly shines in her role at Pomona, saying, "Pomona Catholic is a beacon of light on the corner of Holt and White. We charge our students to bear the Light of Christ to all they meet. I am so very proud to be part of the legacy which is Pomona Catholic." 🌸



More Felician Sisters in EDUCATION & CHILD CARE

Sr. Mary Adrian Jumbelic

- Assistant Felician School for Exceptional Children Lodi, NJ

Sr. Mary Charles Wienckoski

- Principal St. Helena School Edison, NJ

Sr. Christina Marie Conroy

- Campus Minister
- Theology Teacher
- Confirmation Coordinator
- Guidance Teacher St. Augustine High School Laredo, TX

Sr. Christina Marie Luczynski

- Principal Holy Family School Syracuse, NY

Sr. Cynthia Marie Babyak

- Campus Minister St. Thomas Aquinas High School Edison, NJ

Sr. Mary David Malczynski

- Teacher Assistant
- Resource Center Felician School for Exceptional Children Lodi, NJ

Sr. Diane Marie Szykowski

- Teacher, Grade 4 Our Lady of Black Rock School Buffalo, NY

Sr. Donna Marie Trukowski

- President
- Former Principal St. Thomas Aquinas High School Edison, NJ

Sr. Mary Eileen Wardzala

- Teacher Assistant Little Angels Day Care Center Chicago, IL

Sr. Mary Felicia Brodowski

- Teacher Assistant Over 21 Program Felician School for Exceptional Children Lodi, NJ

Sr. Mary Francianne Zielezinski

- Teacher Our Lady of Black Rock School Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary Fides Milwicz

- Finance Manager
- Financial Aid Assistant Felician School for Exceptional Children Lodi, NJ

Sr. Jeanne Marie Akalski

- Teacher, Grade 4 St. Joseph School Webster, MA

Sr. Mary Jo Ellen Tyranowski

- Kindergarten Aide St. Christina School Chicago, IL

Sr. Juanella Maria Pereyra

- Teacher Holy Cross Elementary School Las Cruces, NM

Sr. Lois Marie Mitoraj

- Tutor Siena Literacy Center Livonia, MI

Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki

- Associate Professor of Theology, Emerita Fordham University Bronx, NY

"I have always loved the vocation of teaching and believe that I have made a difference in the lives of my students."



Sr. Marilyn Ann Dudek

- Principal Sts. Peter and Paul School Hamburg, NY

Sr. Mary Ann Papiez

- Religion Teacher, Grades 5-8 St. Joseph School Webster, MA

Sr. Rena Marie Romero

- Theology Teacher St. Pius X High School Albuquerque, NM

Sr. Rose Marie Smiglewski

- Executive Director Felician School for Exceptional Children Lodi, NJ

Sr. Marie Teresa Soltys

- Religion Teacher, Grade 6 Immaculate Conception School Spotswood, NJ

Sr. Mary Timothy Ruzsala

- Teacher Assistant Felician School for Exceptional Children Lodi, NJ

SR. MARY JACQUELINE KEEFE PROVIDING A PLACE FOR CONTEMPLATION



At **Jericho House**, Sr. Jacquie welcomes guests into a safe space of reflection and healing.

Photography by Jon Evans



Jericho House is both a place and an experience — a beautiful building modeled on the San Damiano cross, surrounded by verdant Canadian woodlands — that takes people both young and old away from daily cares into a welcoming, healing, and evangelizing space.

Christian Brother Bill Carrothers began the retreat ministry program that would become Jericho House in 1987. He wanted to create a space for young people to focus on personal and spiritual development.

In 1991, he invited Sr. Mary Jacqueline Keefe to join the ministry, and she accepted: “I really believed in the Spirit of our God’s love and what the dream and vision of Jericho House stood for.”

Jericho House first made its home in Mono Mills, Ontario, where they welcomed more than 8,500 students to their programs. Then, in 2011, the program moved to a new facility designed specifically for them in Wainfleet in the Diocese of St. Catherines.

“It is an oasis,” said Sr. Jacquie, “We have 17 acres, five trails in the forest, a labyrinth, and the TransCanada Trail that leads to Lake Erie. The Niagara Peninsular Conservation Authority has 450 acres beside us. It’s a place that people want to come back to; it’s a healing place and a very respectful place for all peoples and the earth.”

Since opening at its new location, guest numbers have steadily



increased; both youth and adult retreats are growing, and of the 60-70 groups, totaling 3,500 people, who visit each year, half are adults.

In addition to the leadership of Br. Bill and Sr. Jacquie, Jericho House is also supported by a board of directors, an advisory board, volunteers, and staff, all dedicated to sustaining this essential ministry of spiritual direction. John Dekker, a nine-year member of the Jericho House advisory board, said, “Everything we do is volunteer. All the board members are from different backgrounds and walks of life.” As a retired farmer, Dekker brings numerous gifts to the board, among which are planting, landscaping, and drainage for the 17 acres of grounds. As past director and deputy director of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, he also provides valuable insights in helping guide Jericho’s long-term relationship with Catholic schools in the diocese.

Dekker believes in the power of the program to get young people thinking: “We’re not going to be the be-all and end-all, but we’re going to get young people to think about how they are going to grow up with a certain amount of faith and of hope.”

“Right now, we’re just about where we dreamed of being 22 years ago,” Dekker said. Jericho House has just inked a contract with the Niagara Catholic School Board for its Journey Program, offering one-day retreats for students in 8th grade for each of about 60 schools.

One of Jericho House’s goals is that visitors and guests “walk away realizing even more their wonderful relationships with God, others, themselves and the earth. And that they continue ‘experiencing God’s heart beating with an unfathomable love for all of them from the very breath of creation,’” Sr. Jacquie said, quoting Daniel O’Leary.

Dekker said that Sr. Jacquie reflects the Felician charism “about 120%. She is always a joy to be around; you always feel like you are a special person when you are here.”

Sr. Jacquie and Br. Bill have certainly embraced this ministry, but they see themselves merely as instruments of God’s will. “We set the table, but the Holy Spirit is really the host of the dinner,” said Br. Bill. “Our aim is to create a welcoming space for healing and evangelizing.” 🌿



More Felician Sisters in SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Sr. Mary Antonelle Chunka

- Faith Minister
- Prison Ministry

Archdiocese of Newark/
Diocese of Trenton
Newark, Elizabeth, & Trenton, NJ

Sr. Barbara Marie Juskiewicz

- Spiritual Assistant
- Spiritual Director

St. Thomas More Fraternity
Immaculate Heart of Mary Convent
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary Celestine Giertych

- Spiritual Direction
- Retreat Director

Mississauga, ON, Canada

Sr. Dorothy Ann Mary Moczygamba

- Director of Faith Formation
- Spiritual Director

St. Clare Catholic Church
San Antonio, TX

Sr. Mary Dorothy Young

- Deacon Candidate Formation
Team Member

Diocese of Las Cruces
Las Cruces, NM

Sr. Peggy Marie Rosehart

- Spiritual Direction

Retreat Training Program
Ignatius Retreat Center
Mississauga, ON, Canada

Sr. Mary Roberta Moser

- Speaker
- Retreat Director

Care Centers
Milwaukee, WI

Sr. Mary Rosalind Rosolowski

- Chaplain

Attica Correctional Facility
Attica, NY

Sr. Rosemarie Goins

- Director

Spirituality Center
St. Augustine High School
Laredo, TX

Sr. Theresa Francis Marie De Feo

- Administrator

De Paul Evangelization Center
Montebello, CA

Sr. Judith Marie Blizzard

- Spiritual Director
- Retreat Director

Vocation Discernment House
Coraopolis, PA

"I can't imagine my life without God and have been blessed with faith-filled people who have helped me on my spiritual journey. I want to be that for other people."



Photo by Elliott Cramer



Felician Youth Leadership Experience

July 9-14, 2021

Felician Maryville
Retreat Center
Holly, Michigan

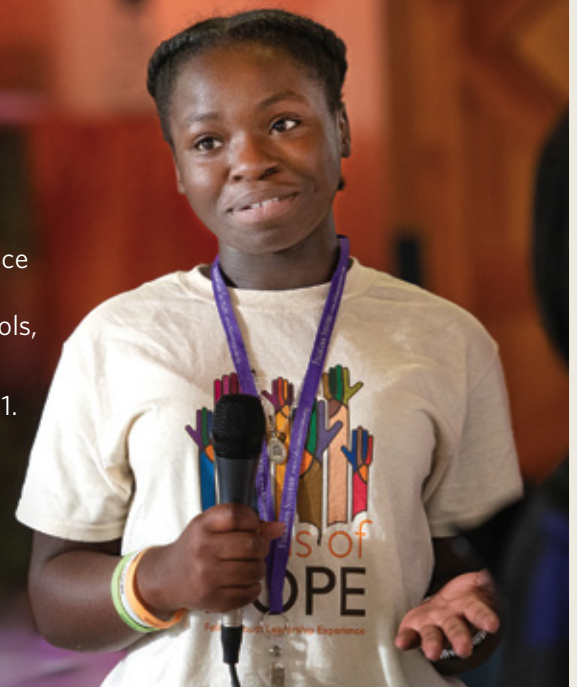
Scholarships are available,
Sponsorships are needed.

Sow the Seeds of CHANGE

Seeds of Hope Felician Youth Leadership Experience is a national leadership conference that prepares young women for leadership roles by providing them with experiences, tools, resources, confidence and support.

Applications are now being accepted for 2021. Participants are young women entering grades 10-12 and recent graduates. We are also seeking successful professional women to serve as mentors.

For information, visit feliciansisterna.org/seedsofhope.



Sr. Dong Hong Marie Zhang

SERVING THE CHINESE COMMUNITY



Sr. Dong Hong knows what it is like to feel the pull between her faith and the secular culture around her, and she seeks to share that empathy with Chinese Americans as she accompanies them through the challenges of faith, culture, and life.



Chinese Americans are only **1.5%** of the U.S. population.

31% of that population are Christian.



As the Liaison to the Chinese Community for the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ, Sr. Dong Hong Marie Zhang is reaching out to the Chinese community as a companion, guide, and witness of the Catholic faith. Through this multi-faceted ministry, Sr. Dong Hong lives out the model of accompaniment and total availability set by Felician Foundress Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska.

Born in Jinning City in northern China, Sr. Dong Hong's family celebrated their Catholic heritage. Her great grandparents had survived the Boxer Uprising in 1900, when a Chinese organization known as the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists led a rebellion against the spread of Western and Japanese influence in China and killed many foreigners and Chinese Christians.

Having five priests and two nuns come from his family, Sr. Dong Hong's father entered the seminary, but after it was closed by the local communist government, he entered medical school, where he met Sr. Dong Hong's mother, also a physician.

Following in her parents' footsteps, Sr. Dong Hong also graduated from medical school and worked as a doctor of internal medicine at a teaching hospital in Wuhan City, but she felt that her Christian values were at conflict with the culture in which she lived and worked. She was afraid to share her faith even with her friends, saying that the popular opinion was that "religious belief was backwards and superstitious, and only illiterate and elderly people believed it. It was difficult to make my faith public since the hospital where I worked belonged to the government. My heart was aching, and I was searching for the meaning of my life. After numerous rosary prayers and discernment, I found His call — a call to a different path of life."

Taking a leave from her medical career, Sr. Dong Hong worked as a lay missionary in the Philippines for two years, and in the fall of 2001, she came to the United States to pursue a master's degree in pastoral studies at Loyola University in Chicago, IL. It was there that she was introduced to the Felician Sisters.

In 2017, Sr. Dong Hong professed her perpetual vows and the following year, she submitted a proposal to Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.S.s.R, of the Archdiocese of Newark, for the creation of a Chinese Apostolate, including a variety of outreach efforts designed to share the faith by putting it into action in the service of others.

Sr. Dong Hong's role as the Liaison to the Chinese Community includes maintenance of a resource hub on the Archdiocesan website, coordination of Chinese Masses, translation of prayers and reflections, religious education, outreach to inmates at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women, youth program coordination with Asian Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and campus ministry at Seton Hall University.

Beyond her formal role, however, lies perhaps the most rewarding aspect of Sr. Dong Hong's ministry: a ministry of presence to the Chinese community. Among other things, she offers rides to appointments, help with translation, and guidance through the immigration process. One young man was so touched by the assistance she gave him during the pandemic that he told her, "Sister, I hope I can come back to the U.S. If I come back, I will get baptized in this church," and recently, after a ride to JFK Airport, one woman told her, **"Sister, through you, I see God. As soon as I return to China, I will look for a Catholic church."** 🌸

Learn more about the **CHINESE APOSTOLATE FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK** at rcan.org/chinese-catholic-apostolate.

More Felician Sisters in DIOCESAN MINISTRIES

Sr. Anne Marie Jablonicky

■ Counselor/Therapist
Diocesan Counseling Center
for Church Ministries
Diocese of Buffalo
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary Edna Pearl Esquibel

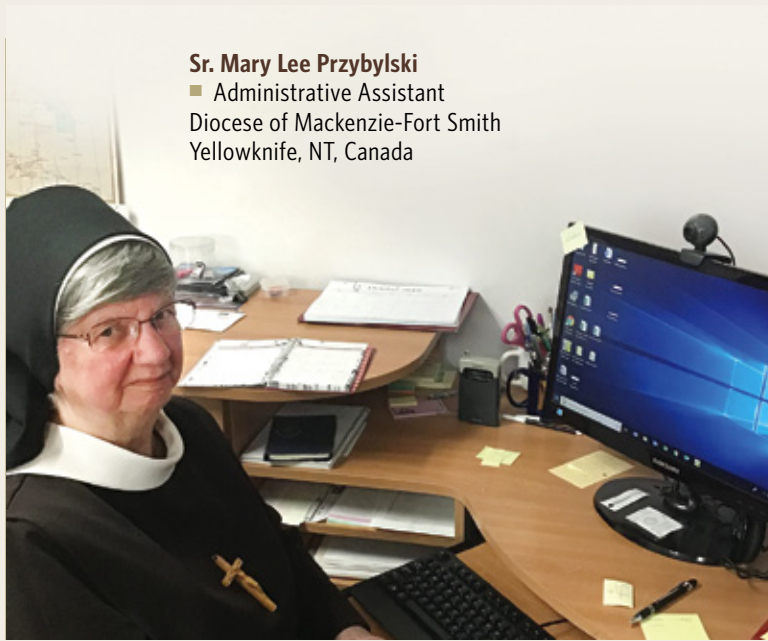
■ Director of Religious Education
Archdiocese of Santa Fe
Albuquerque, NM

Sr. Rose Marie Kujawa

■ Delegate for Consecrated Life
Archdiocese of Detroit
Detroit, MI

Sr. Mary Sharon Iacobucci

■ Delegate for Religious
Diocese of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA



Sr. Mary Lee Przybylski

■ Administrative Assistant
Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith
Yellowknife, NT, Canada

"Most meaningful to me is my contact in home visits to the needy through the St. Vincent de Paul Society. I am able to talk and pray with the people, mostly single moms with children. When I am out and about in town, the homeless stop me and ask for prayers and a blessing which is very humbling."

"I saw very suddenly the stark contrast between how I was living my life and how I wanted to live my life, and I knew then that these sisters were the women I wanted to journey with."

Sr. Desiré Anne-Marie Findlay



Learn About Life as a Felician Sister

We are a joyful community of consecrated religious women who live an active-contemplative life of service with ministries, across the U.S. and in Canada and Haiti.



If you have questions or would like to talk about your vocation, we invite you to contact:

Sister Desiré Anne-Marie Findlay
Vocation Outreach Minister
desimarie@feliciansisters.org
909-706-2238



Sr. MARY JOANNE SURANNI

JOYFUL PARISH MINISTRY



Sr. Joanne's joyful invitation to the faith is transforming hearts and building community.

Joyful. It's the one word everyone seems to use to describe Sr. Mary Joanne Suranni, director of religious education at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Niagara Falls, NY.

Longtime friend Theresa Meranto, whose grandchildren had Sr. Joanne as a teacher at North Tonawanda Catholic School, said, "My grandchildren loved her — they loved her. It's just that joy that comes out of her." Likewise, coworker Maxine Menshon said, **"She is the most joyful woman I have ever met. That is because she puts Jesus first, others second and herself third. She lives a life of joy."**

Fr. Bob Hughson, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, reflected that sentiment, saying, "She injects a lot of her spiritual excitement to whoever she's working with."

Sr. Joanne grew up in Batavia, NY, inspired toward religious life by sisters who taught her at Notre Dame High School. She studied French and first taught French, religion and social studies early in her religious life, later teaching at North Tonawanda Catholic School, which closed in

2010. After working as a religious education director at a local parish, she pursued a degree in pastoral ministry at Christ the King Seminary, and wrote a book recounting the history of the Felician Sisters' former Buffalo province, now in review with provincial leadership.

Sr. Joanne said she believes the Holy Spirit led Fr. Bob to offer her current position to her, saying, "I have found so much goodness in Niagara Falls — good people; salt-of-the-earth people. I think I'm a salt-of-the-earth person. That's why I think it's a good fit for me."

According to Fr. Bob, many students in the faith formation

program are struggling at home, and Sr. Joanne recognizes the need for outreach to all members of the family. "They want to come to Mass, but the parents don't come to church," said Fr. Bob. "She helps to transform their hearts, and works with the parents also, in parent sessions. She tries to bring the parents and kids together by doing that... She is changing their hearts to the love of the Lord."

Parishioner and mother of two Jennifer McDonnell remembers meeting Sr. Joanne when she responded to an ad in the bulletin for vacation Bible school. She called to ask whether her daughter, then not yet 4, could attend — receiving an enthusiastic "yes." "Cara just took to her and they've been best friends ever since," she said, noting that she now serves on a core team of adults who help with children's liturgy of the word.



Though COVID-19 has required many adjustments to Sacrament preparation this year, Sr. Joanne continues to find inspiration in the children and their growth in their faith. One of her favorite memories of Confirmation preparation was holding a Holy Hour, during which students left their cell phones behind.

"We developed the theme, *Facetime with Jesus*, and we put out the blessed Sacrament and introduced them to Jesus. We had a Scripture reading and guided meditation: Think of what you are thankful for and talk with Jesus about that. Think of problems or difficulties you have; talk with Jesus about that. Now we are just going to ask you to be quiet and listen for what

Jesus might have to say to you."

As the students returned to the hall for refreshments, some of the boys were overheard saying, "Did you feel something? I felt something."

Sr. Joanne acknowledged that advocating for faith to play a larger role in people's busy lives is difficult at times, saying "The world is challenging, because we want people to make faith and their relationship with Christ a priority, but it isn't sometimes." She works with parents and finds speakers who can relate to them, such as the wife of a deacon who raised five children. "The parents came out of that room saying, 'We could listen to her for two days,' she said.

Sr. Joanne's favorite part of her work is when someone wants to join faith formation after being away from the Church. "I love to welcome them into this faith, into this learning, into this relationship with Christ," she said remembering a young lady named Hannah who came in "kicking and screaming," but acknowledged later, "I knew the first time I walked in that I belonged here."

Hannah now serves as an aide on Sunday mornings. "I think when she is here there's a sense of peace, and giving of herself, and acceptance. There's a sense of belonging — that's what everyone really wants, is a sense of belonging." 🌸

More Felician Sisters in PARISH MINISTRIES

Sr. Mary Andrew Wiercinski

- Sacristan
 - Ministry to Sick and Homebound
- Blessed Mary Angela Parish
Dunkirk, NY

Sr. Mary Anthonille Tyczkowski

- Secretary
 - Sacramental Program Teacher
- St. Josaphat Parish
Cheektowaga, NY

Sr. Mary Auguste Biache

- Faith Formation
- St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish
Lodi, NJ

Sr. Mary Bernice Pikul

- Director of Religious Education
- St. Adalbert Parish
Providence, RI

Sr. Christina Marie Kazimirek

- Pastoral Assistant
- St. Clement Church
Etobicoke, ON, Canada

Sr. Maria Consolata Fok

- Pastoral Assistant
- St. Agnes Kouying Tsao
Catholic Church
Markham, ON, Canada

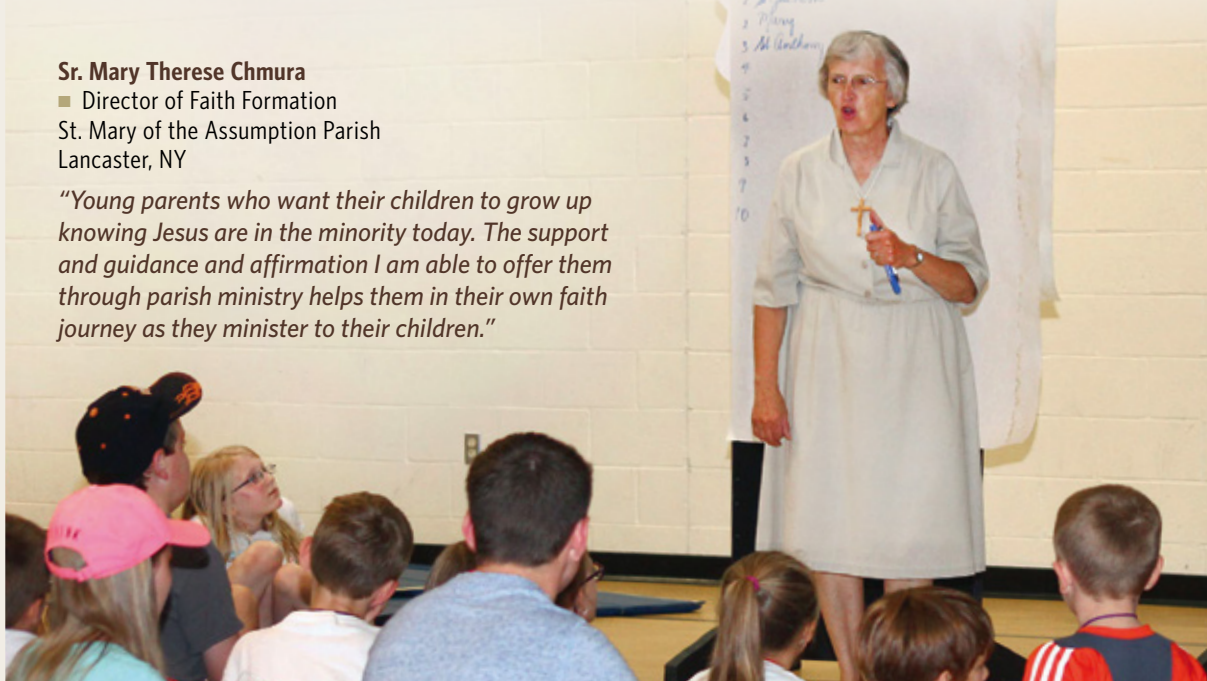
Sr. Mary Eliana Remiszewski

- Coordinator of Religious Education
 - Teen Ministry
 - Pastoral Ministry
- Polish Community
St. Turibius Parish
Chicago, IL

Sr. Mary Therese Chmura

- Director of Faith Formation
- St. Mary of the Assumption Parish
Lancaster, NY

"Young parents who want their children to grow up knowing Jesus are in the minority today. The support and guidance and affirmation I am able to offer them through parish ministry helps them in their own faith journey as they minister to their children."



Sr. Mary Elizabeth Mackowiak

- Pastoral Associate
 - Grief Support Ministry
 - Spiritual Director
- 14 Holy Helpers Parish
West Seneca, NY

Sr. Mary Eunice Olbrantz

- Coordinator of Religious Education
- St. Richard Parish
Chicago, IL

Sr. Mary Faith Balawejder

- Pastoral Associate
- St. Louise de Marillac Parish
Pittsburgh, PA

Sr. Mary Francine Lagocki

- Pastoral Minister
- St. Richard Parish
Chicago, IL

Sr. Janice Marie Gaudette

- Pastoral Associate
 - Religion Teacher
- St. Adalbert Parish
Providence, RI

Sr. Mary Jean Ryder

- Bereavement Ministry
 - RCIA
- St. Joseph Parish
Lodi, NJ and
Our Lady, Queen of Peace
Maywood, NJ

Sr. Mary Joyce Frances King

- Pastoral Associate
- Our Lady of Pompeii Parish
Lancaster, NY

Sr. Mary Leopolda Buczek

- Religious Education
 - Parish Aide
- St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish
Toronto, ON, Canada

Sr. Lois Marie Parente

- Business Manager
- Church of the Nativity
Midland Park and
St. Francis de Sales
Lodi, NJ

(continued)

Sr. Mary Carol Kardell

- Pastoral Work

St. James Parish
New Alexandria, PA

Sr. Mary Eileen Brunton

- Volunteer

St. Patrick Parish
Hamilton, ON, Canada

Sr. Jeremy Marie Midura

- Pastoral Associate

St. Joseph University Parish
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Lisa Marie DiSabatino

- Co-Director of Faith Formation
- Pastoral Assistant

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Faith Formation Program
Wallington, NJ

Sr. Mary Lucette Kinecki

- Pastoral Associate

Blessed Sacrament Parish
Tonawanda, NY

Sr. Lynn Marie Zawacka

- Lazarus Ministry
- Ministry to Sick and Homebound

St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral
Metuchen, NJ

Sr. Maria Magdalena Vallellanes

- Pastoral Assistant

St. Joseph Parish
Lodi, NJ

Sr. Martine Marie Pijanowski

- Pastoral Associate

St. Francis DeSales Parish
Lodi, NJ

Sr. Mary Beth Bromer

- Director of Religious Education

St. Turibius Parish
Chicago, IL

Sr. Maureen Helak

- Pastoral Visitor

Assumption Parish,
Buffalo Health Care Center, and
St. Francis Xavier Soup Kitchen
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary Celeste Goulet

- Pastoral Leader

St. Theresa Mission
Tulita, NT, Canada

Sr. Celeste ministers to the indigenous Slavey people in the remote village of Tulita, Canada, situated approximately 200 kilometers south of the Arctic Circle. She operates a preschool program and provides pastoral service for the people of St. Theresa of Avila Mission.

"I give support and help people know they are loved by God and can walk side by side with all God's children. Children I had in preschool 40 years ago still tell me how they felt special."



Sr. Mary Melanie Jaworski

- Catechetical Leader
- Parish Minister
- Sacristan

Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Syracuse, NY

Sr. Mary Rachel Mikolajczak

- Pastoral Associate
- Director of Religious Education

Blessed Mary Angela Parish
Dunkirk, NY

Sr. Mary Rebecca Piatek

- Pastoral Associate
- Staff Assistant

St. Helena Parish & School
Edison, NJ

Sr. Mary Ruth Warejko

- Director of Religious Education
- Parish Minister

St. Teresa of Avila
Akron, NY

Sr. Sharon Marie Dombrowski

- Administrative Assistant

Immaculate Conception Parish
East Aurora, NY

Sr. Mary Shawn Czyzycki

- Pastoral Associate
- Deacon Formation Program

St. Gregory the Great Parish and Seminary
Diocese of Buffalo
Buffalo, NY

Sr. Mary Teresa Mielech

- Confirmation Facilitator
- Pastoral Care

St. Catherine of Siena Parish and
St. Felix Centre
Mississauga, ON, Canada

Sr. Theresa Marie Grochowski

- Pastoral Associate

St. Bernard Parish
Enfield, CT

Sr. Mary Thomas Lesniak

- Office Assistant
- Pastoral Assistant
- ESL Volunteer Teacher

Holy Family Academy
St. Hedwig Church, and
Holy Cross Family Learning Center
Manchester, NH

Sr. Marie Victoria Bartkowski

- Pastoral Assistant
- Director of Faith Formation

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish
Wallington, NJ

Sr. Mary Victoria Richardson

- Catechist, Grade 2

St. John the Evangelist School
Jackson, MI

Remembering How Your Journey Began

And honoring the Sisters who made it happen. From IRA giving to gifts of stocks and securities, to charitable gift annuities, to making an estate gift, your gift can create a legacy that will continue the journey for those who need it most.

To learn more, visit feliciansistersna.org/giving or contact our Office of Mission Advancement at 724-944-9814 or giving@feliciansisters.org.



FELICIAN SISTERS OF NORTH AMERICA

Angela's Journey

Ask Angela Moloney, CEO and President of the Catholic Foundation of Michigan, where she got the tools for success, and she will emphatically answer: the Felician Sisters. The mentorship she found in the Sisters at Madonna University provided the support, direction, and sometimes the shove she needed to become a leader in her field and her community.

As a high school graduate, Moloney wanted to attend the state college, but her father was a professor at Madonna University, so off she went. "It was maybe the best decision of my life," she said.

At Madonna, which was founded by the Felician Sisters in 1937, Moloney found mentors who would set her on a path for success in life and in her career. "The Sisters helped me find the components of leadership that I needed: persistence, perseverance, faith, and focus," said Moloney. "They showed me what it means to be a woman leader in our Church."

Moloney laughs as she remembers Sr. Marie Ann Stamm, whose support often came in the form of tough love. She remembers, "As a former police chaplain, Sr. Ann impressed on me that 'Life is not always tidy,' and she pushed me to make hard decisions. When I think about where I am now, as the CEO of a Catholic foundation, I think of her and I credit her with pushing me."

Other Felician Sisters also had a great impact on Moloney. In her free time, she volunteered at the convent infirmary under the supervision of Sr. Victoria Marie Indyk, whom she says taught her the importance of compassion. Lessons in social justice often came from Sr. Mary Martinez Rozek, who coordinated the multicultural club. "This was before other institutions addressed diversity," said Moloney. "She made us face our unconscious biases and learn to create an environment of belonging."

When it came time for Moloney to graduate, she again struggled with finding direction, and Sr. Ann was once again there to give her a push in the right direction. "I thought about doing different things, maybe mission work, but Sr. Ann said, 'No. You're going to graduate school for theology,' and I did. I earned my master's degree from Washington Theological Union in D.C., then went on to Georgetown."



Angela Moloney with her mentor, Sr. Ann Stamm.

Now a successful woman leader in the nonprofit world, Moloney is eager to give back to the women who helped shape the person she's become. "They gave me a beautiful experience where I realized what I wanted to be," she said. **"They invited me to be more than what I expected myself to be."**

When she heard about the death of 13 Felician Sisters in the Livonia, MI, convent, Moloney felt compelled to act. She reached out to Provincial Minister Sr. Mary Christopher Moore to get her blessing on the creation of a fund in support of the Sisters through the Catholic Foundation of Michigan.

Moloney quickly learned that she was not the only person impacted by the Felician Sisters. "So many people wanted to do something, something healing, something beautiful," she said. Mayor of Livonia Maureen Miller Brosnan and Senator Dayna Polehanki both stepped up as champions of the fund.

Sadly, both Sr. Victoria and Sr. Martinez were among those who passed away from COVID-19 this spring, but Sr. Ann was able to attend a check presentation in August. Moloney recalled, "As she was pushed into the room in her wheelchair, she yelled out, 'Come here. You're one of mine.'" Through tears of gratitude, she added, "Just her remembering me after all that time meant so much." 🌸

If you would like to make a gift of support to **THE FELICIAN SISTERS OF NORTH AMERICA**, visit feliciansistersna.org/CFM.

Livonia Community Responds with Love

With the loss of 13 Sisters to COVID-19, locals showed their support in many ways.

One family created hand-made cards for each of the Sisters and drove 45 minutes to Livonia to deliver them in person



Local artist Edward "Gonzo" Stross painted a portrait of each of the 13 sisters lost to COVID-19 on the side of his art studio to honor their memory

Photo by Patricia O'Blenes courtesy C&G Newspapers.

"The Felician legacy of unconditional compassion for people, coupled with their inherent desire to meet the community's most basic needs in healthcare and education make them inspiring, strong women. We are saddened by the loss of so many sisters but **we will be forever grateful God placed them in our city.**"



Maureen Miller Brosnan, Livonia Mayor and Champion of the Felician Sisters Support Fund

CARE FOR CREATION: OUR FAITH RESPONSIBILITY

By Sr. Mary Jean Sliwinski, Provincial Sustainability Coordinator

Pope Francis released his encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* in 2015 and added it to the body of the Church's social teaching. In this document, Pope Francis quotes the Canticum of the Creatures of St. Francis of Assisi and says, "In the words of this beautiful canticum, St. Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us" (LS,1).

Pope Francis does not shy away from the seriousness of the situation when he states, "The earth, our home is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth" (LS, 21). Today, we see that our footprint upon the earth has been less than kind. However, all is not lost, nor should we fall into despair. "Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning" (LS, 205).

Pope Francis addresses the plight of the poor numerous times, noting that those without means are often those who feel the effects of climate and earth destruction the most, even though they have done the least to cause it. The Bolivian Bishops' Conference states, "Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest" (LS, 26).

As a Franciscan community, we are called to live life with reverence for all of God's creation. This call to action is urgent, and the connections between social, economic, political, and environmental issues must be considered. Now is the time to take action.

What can you do to be a more responsible steward of the environment?

- **Contact your local and national political leaders** and call on them to take accountability and action on issues such as clean energy, air and water pollution, deforestation, and protection for workers.
- **Learn to reduce, reuse, recycle**, and yes, even refuse to give in to the pressures of our consumer-driven society.
- **Examine and adjust your behaviors.** Even small changes can make a difference, like planting a garden, buying local, or traveling less.
- **Build a relationship with the earth.** Spend some time outdoors experiencing the world around you with your senses; no earbuds, no noise, just listening, seeing, smelling, touching, being.

If we all take responsibility for the care of our common home, we can make progress toward healing the environment and caring for our global neighbors. 🌿

Illustration by a student of the
Mooncrest Neighborhood
After School Program

You can find a link to *On Care for Our Common Home* on our website at feliciansistersna.org/socialjustice.

The Madonna University Welcome Center is scheduled to open in January 2021 and will include space for exhibits, administrative offices, event space and the Felician Sisters of North America Archives and Heritage Center — scheduled to open later in 2021. The building will serve as a hub of the campus, where the journeys of Madonna students will begin and where the Felician Sisters' heritage can be celebrated every day.



RENDERING

The Felician Sisters are active sponsors of U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking which works to promote awareness regarding human trafficking; to exchange best practices in advocacy for and empowerment of survivors of human trafficking; to recommend actions to counter human trafficking; and to share information about survivor services. Watch for their monthly newsletter, which is shared on the FSNA website at feliciansistersna.org/advocacy.



What to Watch in 2021

Watch your mailboxes for the 2020 Year In Review coming in January.

Vocation Outreach Minister Sr. Desiré Anne-Marie Findlay is taking her ministry online with the creation of Zoom groups and virtual events to provide support for women discerning a vocation to religious life during the pandemic. Learn more at feliciansistersna.org/vocation.



Maryville Retreat Center in Holly, MI, debuted a new lineup of programming, including prayer groups, Eucharistic Adoration, book clubs, retreats and more. Look for more programming to come after the first of the year at maryvilleretreatcenter.org. The Center is also available to rent for private events.



FELICIAN MINISTRIES IN NORTH AMERICA

We are the Felician Sisters of North America and are proud to share the following groups of ministries that we sponsor, co-sponsor or support through the presence of our sisters. To support or to learn more about our ministries, visit feliciansistersna.org/ministries.

EDUCATION & CHILD CARE

Early Childhood

Enfield Montessori School
Enfield, CT

Felician Children's Center
Jackson, MI

Montessori Center
of Our Lady
Livonia, MI

Sister Celeste
Child Development Centre
Tulita, NT, Canada

St. Joseph Academy
Milwaukee, WI

St. Mary Child Care Center
Livonia, MI

High Schools

Holy Name of Mary
College School
Mississauga, ON, Canada

Immaculate Conception
High School
Lodi, NJ

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
High School
Coraopolis, PA

Colleges and Universities

Felician University
Lodi, NJ

Madonna University
Livonia, MI

Villa Maria College
Buffalo, NY

AT-RISK YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mooncrest
Neighborhood Programs
Coraopolis, PA

United Stand
Chicago, IL

Villa Maria Youth Program
Buffalo, NY

ENRICHMENT AND OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

Jericho House
Port Colborne, ON, Canada

Maryville Retreat Center
Holly, MI

Seeds of Hope
Felician Youth
Leadership Conference
Holly, MI

MINISTRY TO THE MARGINALIZED AND THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY

Angela Spirituality Center
Pomona, CA

Deo Gratias Ministries
Detroit, MI

Felician Center
Kingstree, SC

Felician Wellness Center
Centralia, IL

Response to Love Center
Buffalo, NY

Sister Josette Food Pantry
Buffalo, NY

St. Felix Centre
Toronto, ON, Canada

St. Felix Pantry
Rio Rancho, NM

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Angela Court Senior Residence
Philadelphia, PA

Francis House
Philadelphia, PA

Our Lady of Grace Village
Newark, DE

SENIOR LIVING & HEALTH CARE

Angela Hospice Home Care
Livonia, MI

Felician Adult Day Center
Enfield, CT

Felician Village
Manitowoc, WI

Good Samaritan Hospital
Mount Vernon, IL

Marywood
Nursing Care Center
Livonia, MI

Senior Clergy Village
Livonia, MI

St. Anne Home
Greensburg, PA

St. Francis Residence
Enfield, CT

St. Ignatius
Nursing & Rehab Facility
Philadelphia, PA

St. Mary's Hospital
Centralia, IL

Villa St. Francis
Milwaukee, WI

MINISTRY TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

McGuire Memorial
New Brighton, PA

MISSION MINISTRY

Felician Mission: Haiti
Jacmel, Haiti

Felician Mission: Tulita
Tulita, NT, Canada

PASTORAL MINISTRY

As an evangelical community of consecrated women religious, we commit ourselves to the universal mission of the Church. We are diocesan vocation directors, case workers, counselors and youth ministers. We serve on diocesan marriage tribunals, organize retreats, direct youth leadership programs, help facilitate social services and work on diocesan newspapers. We serve as pastoral associates and in pastoral ministries, helping to prepare for liturgical celebrations, leading sacramental preparation classes, leading adult faith formation classes and making hospital and home visits.



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www.feliciansistersna.org

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In this time of crisis and great need, we are praying for you.

We know this year has impacted all of us and we hope to bring you peace and comfort during this time of great need. We hope you will pray with us, through the Intercession of our Foundress, Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska.

*God our Father,
we praise and thank you for the gift of
Blessed Mary Angela, who lived your
will in faith and trust, and lived your love
in service to others.*

*We pray in confidence, that through
her intercession you will grant us the
favor of healing for the sick and mercy
for those oppressed by the pandemic
of the coronavirus.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

**To receive a Blessed Mary Angela
prayer card** — please send an email to:
feliciansisters@feliciansisters.org
and include your full name and
mailing address.

