

the FELICIAN



The MAGAZINE of the FELICIAN SISTERS of NORTH AMERICA





FELICIAN SISTERS
OF NORTH AMERICA

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

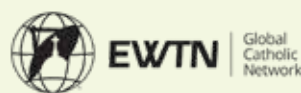
The Felician Sisters, formally known as the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Felix of Cantalice, is a congregation of women religious, inspired by the spiritual ideals of their foundress Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska and Saints Francis of Assisi, Clare of Assisi and Felix of Cantalice. Founded 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



Read stories and watch videos at
FelicianSistersNA.org/Haiti.
Read more on page 33.



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Sign up for our monthly electronic newsletter at FelicianSistersNA.org.

Stained glass created by Sr. Mary Ann Therese Kelly

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The MAGAZINE of the FELICIAN SISTERS of NORTH AMERICA

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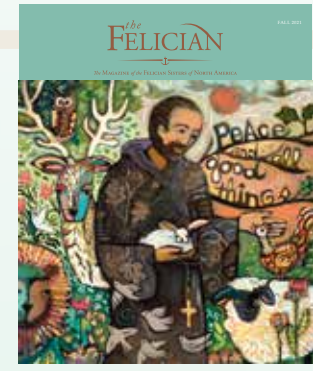
In Every Issue

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Cover

"Saint Francis" by artist Jen Norton is full of vibrant earthy tones and joyfulness. Jen believes through art, one can hear the whisper of the mighty creator. She seeks to cause viewers to pause and reflect.

See Jen Norton's work at jennortonartstudio.com.





Dear Friends,

Most of us lead busy, complicated and demanding lives. The practice of mindfulness can help us to maintain our focus so we don't lose sight of what is really important. Mindfulness can keep us centered on leading the life that God, in His goodness, intends for us.

Mindfulness has a way of opening up our lives and opening up our vision of reality. It enables us to reach out with empathy to others, especially those who may be different from us. Such openness inspires compassion and leads to action. And **when we open our ears to the voice of God, we become more aware of how He speaks to us in ordinary, daily experiences.**

When Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska founded our congregation, she chose the Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. The legacy of this poor man of Assisi inspires our life and our Constitutions. And while popular myth has depicted Francis of Assisi as a lover of animals, the reality goes deeper than that. Today Francis' love for nature inspires us to respect all of creation as God's precious gift. This challenges us to live simply and with ecological sensitivity. Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, calls us to responsibility for our common home. Both St. Francis of Assisi and our foundress, Blessed Mary Angela, were mindful — attentive to the call of God expressed through the needs of God's people.

I am delighted and humbled to serve as provincial minister of Our Lady of Hope Province. Our dynamic community of sisters is serving God's people across the continent and in Haiti. Our many ministries express the charism of our foundress Blessed Mary Angela, as we meet the needs of today's society through presence, openness and acceptance. We uphold her legacy in our daily actions by seeing Christ in every face we meet and following God's plan wherever it leads.

Inspired by the fruit of our ministry — from new leaders and innovative programs to the successes of children and young adults moving through our Felician schools and universities — I recognize God's hand and your support in the positive changes we have made in the world and have hope for even greater progress in the future. In the words of St. Francis, I greet you,

Pax et Bonum!

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

Dear Felician Sisters...



Discovering Family

Sr. Alice Dunlop came to our home as a hospice chaplain in 2006. A conversation about a St. Francis statue in our garden led to us learning about family connections that fill us with pride and gratitude, as well as fill in our Miller family history of three great aunts: Sr. Gertrude, Sr. Delores and Sr. Bernice, who were sisters in life and of St. Francis.

Richard and Jane Miller

Inspirational College President



I taught at Felician College when Sr. Theresa Mary Martin was president. I will never forget her saying "God can't not love you!"

Jacqueline Bakal

With Us in Hard Times

If I had a strong arm, I could throw a stone and hit the Felician grounds in Livonia from my house. When my dear wife Joan was fighting cancer, Sr. Mary Agnistine Rosinski would call her many times a week. The Felician Sisters also hired my special-needs son Scott in the kitchen on their grounds.

John S. Elliott



A Treasure

Sr. Mary Ellen Pollack, who had her 61st anniversary in March 2021, served in Rome for 16 years from 1995 to 2011 and acquired a rosary that was "blessed" and "hand



Sr. Ellen, bottom-left

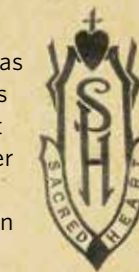
handed" to her by Pope John Paul. She mailed me that rosary when she heard I didn't have one. She gave up a treasure for me. "Impacted?" Yes — and very blessed.

Bill Penkva

A Guiding Star

In 1964, Sr. Mary Simplicia was my junior and senior business class teacher at Sacred Heart Academy in Syracuse, NY. Her grace, humility and kindness was an important influence on me at that time and made a difference in who I am today.

Donna R. Jarka



Model Franciscan Felician, Mentor and Friend

I had the privilege and good fortune to work with Sr. Fredrica Polanski as an administrator at a school. She taught me a great deal and is a wonderful model of what it means to be a Franciscan Felician. Our continued friendship brought us together in the youth program she started.



M. Anne Wojick

Teacher and Lifelong Friend

We used to cook homemade pierogi and golumki and get fresh and smoked sausage and rye bread and bring it to Mississauga for dear Sr. Claudianne, our 8th grade teacher at St. Barbara's in 1968. We kept in contact and know Sister died right before her 100th birthday. Sto Lat, Sister! You're celebrating your best birthday ever in heaven!



Jean (Kwas) Hoefler and Susan (Janicki) Oakley

Sr. Euphemia



Sister Mary Euphemia
Principal . . . counselor . . .
history teacher . . . "heart"
of SCH . . . Friend to all . . .
VACS advisor . . . "Where
there is despair, hope."

Sr. Mary Euphemia Mikolaczzyk was the principal of St. Casimir High School in Detroit, MI (1965). She was the only person who believed in me and supported me in a time of crisis. Without her I would not be where I am today. I pray for her daily.

Gregory J. Osowski

Grateful for What I Am Today

When I was young, I was in an orphanage in Utica, NY because my mother was too ill to care for us. If it weren't for the Felician Sisters I don't know where we would be. At Our Lady of Lourdes, Sr. Joan D'Arc saw in me what others did not — she knew I had ADD before it was heard of. She told me, "You just learn differently than others." She never gave up on me — what I am today I owe to many, and Sr. Joan and other sisters are at the top of the list.

Cecilia A. Berntsen

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 SEEKING THE NEEDS OF THE TIME

St. Francis of Assisi said, “We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.” He calls on us to set aside our biases and fears and build relationships based on love and understanding.

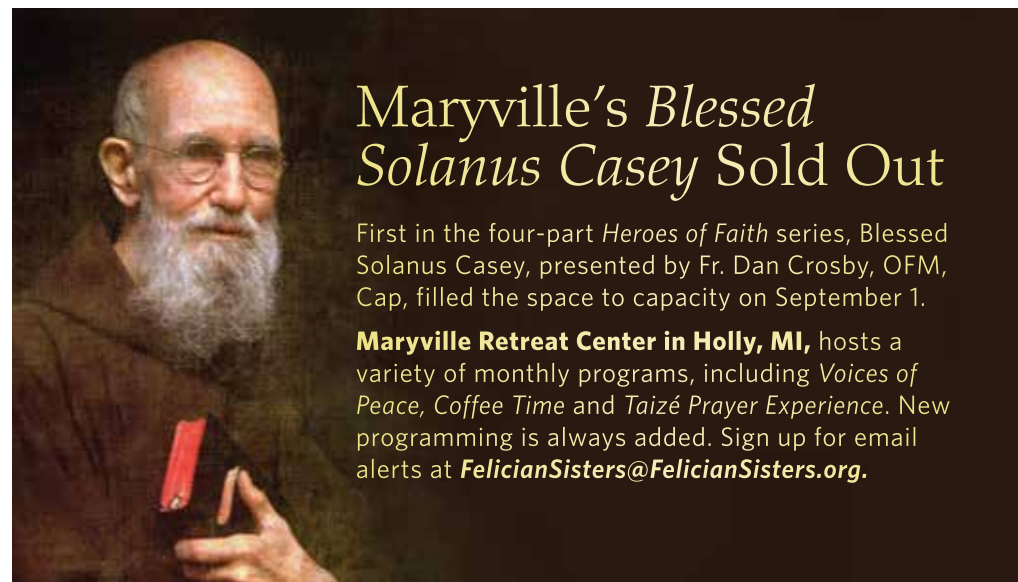
Change begins with the choice to take action, and the Felician Sisters and their ministries make that choice every day — identifying the needs of the times and evolving to meet those needs. When an earthquake and tropical storm hit Haiti, they packed and shipped a container the size of a tractor trailer. When Felician University students didn’t have professional clothing for interviews, they created Suits U. When people were suffering from diabetes and obesity, they created the Felician Wellness Center.

It takes humility to let go of the idea that you know what needs to be done and allow God to reveal His will in His time. It requires an investment in building relationships, listening without bias and being truly present. The Felician Sisters and their ministries will continue to accompany their neighbors, always asking what the needs are and always seeking to meet those needs.



Helping Our Neighbor

Felician Mission: Haiti responded to the needs of neighboring Les Cayes after the August earthquake devastated that city. [Read about the overwhelming response on page 33.](#)



Maryville’s Blessed Solanus Casey Sold Out

First in the four-part *Heroes of Faith* series, Blessed Solanus Casey, presented by Fr. Dan Crosby, OFM, Cap, filled the space to capacity on September 1.

Maryville Retreat Center in Holly, MI, hosts a variety of monthly programs, including *Voices of Peace*, *Coffee Time* and *Taizé Prayer Experience*. New programming is always added. Sign up for email alerts at FelicianSisters@FelicianSisters.org.

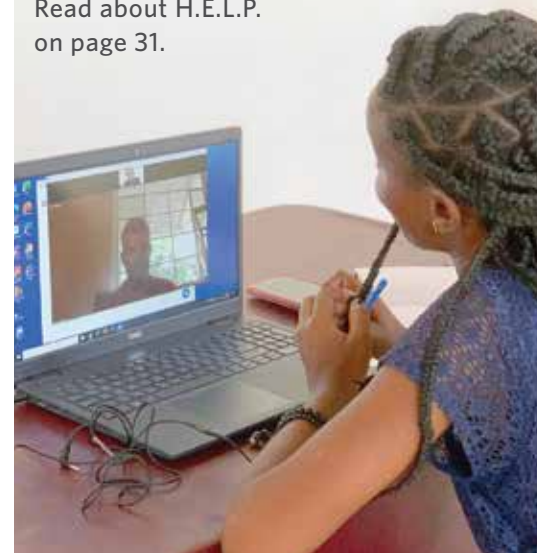
Virtual Volunteerism

Work has begun at **Felician Mission: Haiti** to enroll students from Jacmel in H.E.L.P., Madonna University’s online bachelor’s degree program. To enroll, Creole-speaking students must pass a proficiency exam in English.

Felician Volunteers in Mission (VIM) are lending a hand. VIM offers a remote tutoring program, connecting volunteers in the U.S. with students in Haiti via Zoom to practice English.

If you’d like to tutor from your own home, contact Caroline Stanfill at cstanfill@feliciansisters.org or complete an application online at FelicianSistersNA.org/VIM.

Read about H.E.L.P. on page 31.



Sr. Bernice Pikul — *Bardzo kochany* Posthumous Lumen Gentium Awardee for Catholic Education

Sr. Bernice Pikul, an immigrant from Poland, served most notably at **St. Adalbert School in Providence, RI**, and is credited with having organized a high-quality religious education program there through her innovative and welcoming teaching methods. Fr. Marek Kupka, pastor of St. Adalbert, said of her early days as principal, “In a time of noticeable influx of Polish immigrants to Rhode Island, her mission was not only to pass on the knowledge and faith to her students, but also to introduce many non-English-speaking children and adults to the American church and to American society.” Sr. Bernice passed away on April 25, 2021, at the age of 94.



Madonna University Hosts Author, Mitch Albom at New Welcome Center

Madonna University in Livonia, MI, furthered its commitment to educating Haitians by hosting the 3rd annual Mitch Albom & Friends scholarship fundraiser in their new Welcome Center. The event, which included live and recorded messages from actress Kate Hudson and NFL Hall of Fame athlete Barry Sanders, raises money to help students at Albom’s Have Faith Haiti orphanage earn their degrees from a participating Michigan college. Two students from Albom’s mission are currently enrolled at Madonna University, which also runs a satellite degree program based in Haiti. Programs like these aim to empower the Haitian people to return to their country and effect change in their communities.



Mitch Albom and Friends Scholarship Fundraiser



Former Madonna University President Sr. Rose Marie Kujawa with Mitch Albom and his children.

Left: The author and guest speakers Kate Hudson, Bradley Whitford and Barry Sanders.



Celebrating 50 Years

Students at the **Felician School for Exceptional Children in Lodi, NJ**, spent time with Michelangelo, an equine therapy horse, as they kicked off their Empowerment Program — part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the school's founding in 1971 by Felician Sr. Mary Ramona Borkowski.

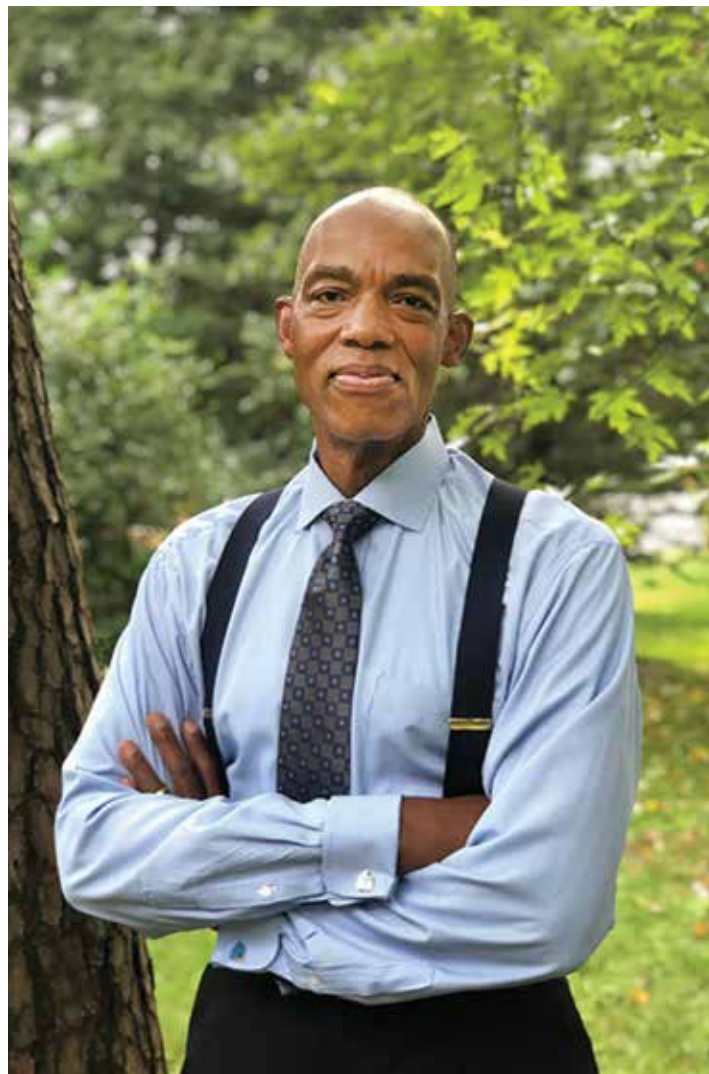
Introducing President Crawford

After almost a year of interim service, Admiral James W. Crawford III was appointed president of **Felician University in Lodi, NJ**. A retired admiral and the 43rd Judge Advocate General (JAG) of the United States Navy, Crawford successfully guided the university through the dark days of the COVID-19 pandemic, even seeing an increase in enrollment under his leadership. Chris Swenson, chair of the university's Board of Trustees, said, "Many we spoke to during this process described him as inspirational, a servant leader and someone who truly lives our Felician core values. His hands-on experience in steering the university during one of the most challenging periods in its history enables him to step into the role of president, fully prepared to take us to new heights."



LaShawn Chinn Appointed Director of Sr. Mary Josette Food Pantry

LaShawn Chinn believes that by providing services and resources to help people improve, we are better as a community. This spring, the Villa Maria College graduate became director of the **Sr. Mary Josette Food Pantry in Buffalo, NY**, assisting supervisor Sr. Mary Michealanne Galas. The food pantry, located on the Villa Maria campus, serves mostly community residents, but 10% of the clients are students. "In addition to food, we provide deodorant, toothpaste and laundry detergent," Chinn said. She is challenged with getting the word out that the pantry exists. With 14 years in social services at the county and state level and impressive degrees in business management and public administration, Chinn feels that the job is a perfect fit.



Felician Associates Recommit

In August, ten active Felician Associates and one prayer associate renewed their annual commitment to the Felician Sisters at **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Chapel in Coraopolis, PA**. It was the first in-person associate commitment service since the pandemic began.

Felician Associates are lay men and women who make an annual commitment to share in the sisters' mission and to live in the spirit of Blessed Mary Angela. The Felician Sisters, in return, promise to support the associates through their prayers, hospitality and love.

If you are interested in becoming a Felician Associate, visit FelicianSistersNA.org/Associates.

New Head of School at Immaculate Conception High School

Immaculate Conception High School (ICHS) in Lodi, NJ, started the 2021-22 school year under the leadership of Jessica Cutrona (*far left*), the new head of school. Cutrona has been a member of the ICHS faculty for more than 14 years, having begun her career there as an English teacher and gradually taking on roles as department head, student council advisor, school safety coordinator, dean of student life and associate head of school. "The students make the place feel like home," she said. "There is a sisterhood here. We have a saying that girls compete with each other, but women empower each other."



Pen Pals

An intergenerational writing project for the fifth-graders at **St. Joseph Academy in Milwaukee, WI**, has them pairing up with residents of **Villa St. Francis, also in Milwaukee**. Fifty students will write letters to their counterparts at Villa, asking questions about their lives and giving the residents the opportunity to give the children a glimpse into the stories of another generation.

“Suits U” Dresses Students for Success

In 2019, Felician University commissioned a study to determine the unmet needs of its students. The findings were shocking.

A significant number of students reported being food- and housing-insecure. **Students were investing in a college education for a better future and, in doing so, were giving up daily meals or a place to sleep.**

As director of the Blessed Mary Angela Institute of Contemplation, Action and Transformation at the time, Sr. Annelle Velivis knew she had to help.

The reality that college students worried about where their next meal was coming from or where they would sleep that night led to another question;

How could they interview for a job without the means to afford professional clothes?

Sr. Annelle turned to Mike Omansky from the Felician University School of Business and Information Science. He worked with his students to create business plans for an on-campus store offering professional clothing and accessories to students.

“It was important to maintain the dignity of the students who were in need, so we chose the business plan in which students could perform community service hours in exchange for clothing,” Sr. Annelle explained. Students choose to volunteer at local hospitals, churches and urban ministries. “It gave the students an opportunity to earn the clothing and to help others

in the process. We called it *Suits U.*”

Daquan Pullum, a graduate assistant at the time, was brought on as the first manager. “Daquan went to work with bags of donated clothing to create a boutique-like store,” Sr. Annelle recalled. “He put so much thought into the dressing rooms, mannequins and organizing items so perfectly. He gave the student shoppers style ideas to instill them with confidence.”

A grant from the Felician Services, Inc., St. Francis Fund provided start-up for the project. Students volunteer and inventory is donated from the community and university staff. “Ridgewood Moving Services, a local company, partnered with us immediately,” Sr. Annelle

said. “They told me that it’s amazing how much people leave behind when they move.”

One student proudly shared with Sr. Annelle, “**Will you take a look at me? This is the first suit I’ve ever had,** and I never knew how to tie a tie, but Professor Mike helped me.”

Since it opened, Suits U has helped many students dress for the successful careers ahead of them, despite their lack of funds. The university will also soon open a food pantry to address the issue of food insecurity. Sr. Annelle said, “Mother Angela’s life was all about service to the poor. We found that the poor can be disguised in the form of a college student, and we will continue to find ways to serve them.”



Photo by Rick Armstrong



Student Embarks on a Transformational Journey

Beatrice Carcao of **Holy Name of Mary College School, Mississauga, Ontario**, earned a silver Duke of Edinburgh Award this year. Students who participate must work toward various levels of the award that encompass service, skills, physical recreation and an adventurous journey.

The award program is aimed at encouraging young people, aged 14 to 24, to set their own goals and challenges, work toward achieving them, and then be recognized after completion for sustaining the commitment they have made. The fundamental principle is self-motivation.

Carcao describes her adventurous journey:

We travelled around the city for five days, exploring Toronto’s rivers and creeks and deciding whether urbanization affected the natural trend known as the Bradshaw Model by potentially rerouting rivers and diverting water due to the novel construction of buildings. Through our onsite research, we were able to conclude that yes, urbanization has affected the natural trend of rivers — which was evident at Black Creek (a creek in Toronto that was channelized following the flooding of Hurricane Hazel).

Carcao says in the process of working toward the award, she has been able to give back to the community she loves directly through volunteering, and indirectly by forming friendships and using laughter to emotionally aid herself and others. She says the connections she made and the growth achieved are some of the most rewarding parts of the award.

Learn more at holynameofmarycollegeschool.com.

Rising in Rank

U.S. News & World Report ranked Villa Maria College #8 in social mobility. Rankings in this category are based upon graduation rates among students receiving need-based federal grants and indicate the college’s success at advancing social mobility by enrolling and graduating large proportions of disadvantaged students. *Congratulations!*

I AM AN ARTIST

Sr. Ann Therese Kelly

My prayer is expressed in my stained glass creations, which are on display across the globe. Each color, curve and contour is an expression of the Felician joy in my heart — a joy I share with my students at Illumination Studio.

I am a Felician Sister.

Learn more about becoming a Felician Sister on page 26.

Doing “Knotty” Work

Every month, the ladies of **Villa Angela at St. Anne Home in Greensburg, PA**, gather for what Marilyn Hartman calls some “knotty work.” She is quick-witted, compassionate and one of a group of personal care residents who donate their leisure time to make pet beds for CART (County Animal Rescue Team) in Westmoreland, Allegheny and Fayette counties.

Betty Burns, a resident for 10 years, is the expert of the group. She started making beds on her own, then other residents joined in. Making pet beds is now a community event.

Jeff Long, president and CEO of St. Anne Home, shared, **“Engaging the residents to find ways to give back and find new purpose and passions in life is one way we continue the healing mission of Jesus Christ.”**

Constructed of donated fleece and pillow stuffing, the beds are made using a no-sew tying technique. Aides Lynn Scarpe and Misty Barr do all of the cutting and the residents do the tying. The group also creates toys for the pets by braiding strips of fleece. The activity combines socialization, occupational therapy and community building. Last month, they donated nine bags of beds.

Pet beds are one of the most requested items for CART. “The beds go to any of our disaster clients,” said CART chief Lori Mozina, “those who have lost nearly everything because of house fires, floods or financial distress.”

Learn how St. Anne Home provides spiritual, social and emotional support to their residents by visiting StAnneHome.org.



The EDEN Alternative®

The Felician Sisters dedicate themselves to caring for those in need — but what happens when *they* are in need of care? Implementation of The EDEN Alternative model of care has begun as sisters reimagine the care of the elders and medically fragile members of the community.

This summer, lay leaders from across the province gathered at **Maryville Retreat Center in Holly, MI**, to participate in Certified EDEN Associate Training. They had opportunities throughout the three-day training to learn the theory of The EDEN Alternative as well as to interact and put that theory into practice. In the coming months, sisters will also be provided options for further training in the model’s philosophy of well-being.

For information about The EDEN Alternative visit EdenAlt.org.



As we await the completion of the **Felician Sisters of North America Heritage Center & Archives in Livonia, MI**, slowed due to nationwide supply shortages, enjoy an up-close look at the stained-glass feature. The Madonna University Welcome Center, now open and in use, resides within the same structure.

See the entire window on our home page and learn more about our history at FelicianSistersNA.org.

ICHS Alumna Cast as Disney’s Snow White

Rachel Zegler’s dream was to be a real-life Disney princess, and it looks like that dream will finally come true. Disney has cast the **Immaculate Conception High School in Lodi, NJ**, alumna as Snow White in their new live-action film.

This role comes on the heels of Zegler’s film debut in Steven Spielberg’s reimagining of *West Side Story*, scheduled for release later this year, and her announcement that she will also be appearing in the next *Shazam* movie.

Zegler’s success comes as no surprise to those who knew her at ICHS, where she frequently earned starring roles in the school musicals. Now that she has graduated, they expect great things from this rising star.

Rachel Zegler (left) with Disneyland’s Snow White.



L to R: SM Sharon Iacobucci, SM Alexander Klawinski, SM Francine Horos (back) and SM Faith Balawejder



OLSH Grad Dunks on PJ Tucker in NBA Finals

The Felician Sisters of **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Convent in Coraopolis, PA**, had plenty of reason to cheer during the NBA finals this year. Cameron Johnson, a graduate of **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart High School (OLSH)** and now a starting guard for the Phoenix Suns, was putting on a stellar display — including a dunk on Milwaukee Bucks P.J. Tucker that blew up on social media.

The sisters have always been fans of the OLSH Chargers, making frequent appearances in the stands and on the sidelines of the games and even participating in pep rallies. But this is the first time they have been able to watch one of their own play in the pros.

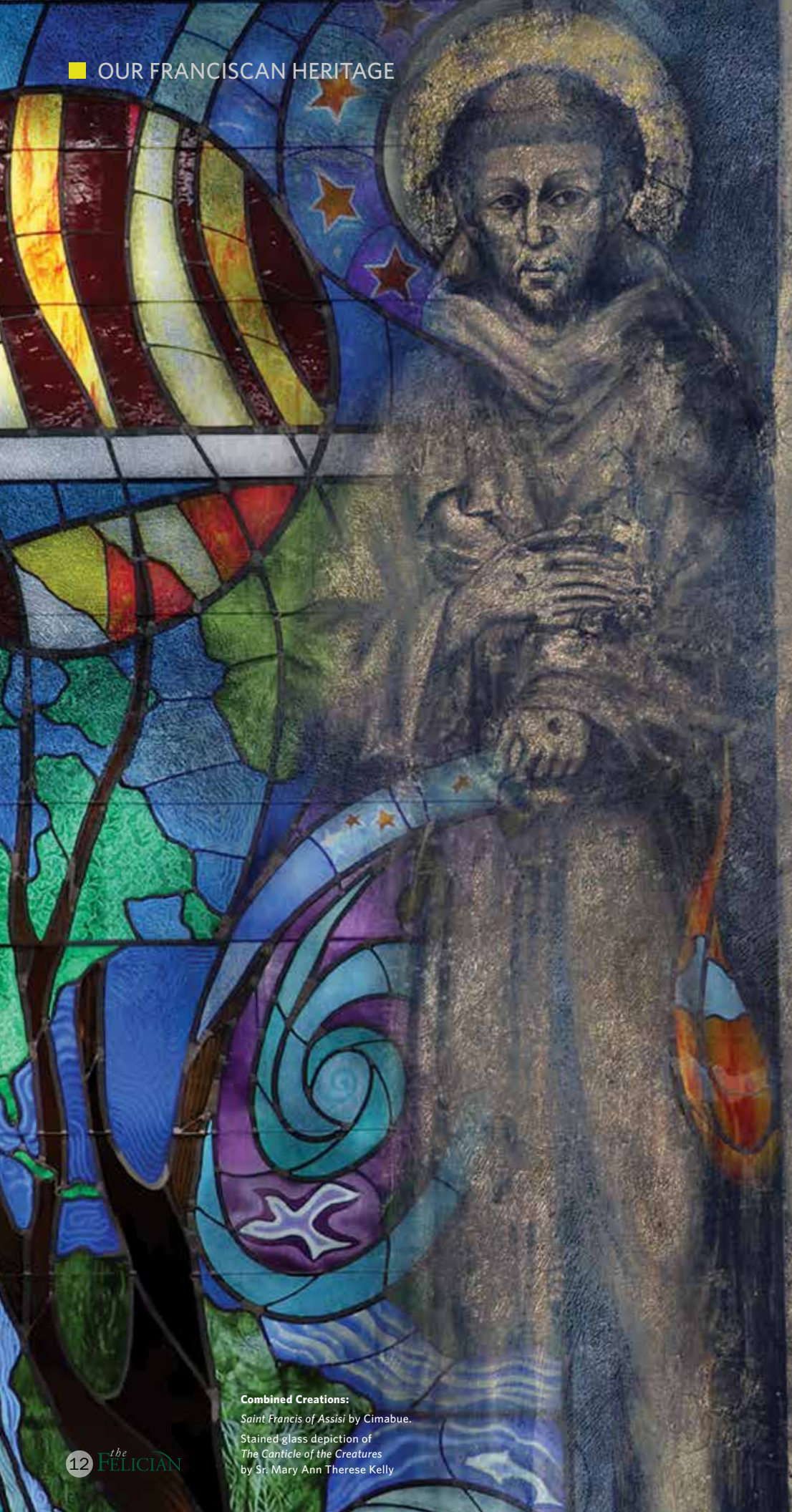
“We followed Cam through high school, then college and now in the NBA. He is an extraordinary player — so smart and so generous. Despite all of his success, he is just such a gentleman,” said Sr. Mary Francine Horos, a teacher at OLSH.

Johnson graduated from OLSH as the salutatorian and was recruited to play at the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in communications in three years. He then set off to the University of North Carolina, where he had three impressive years on the team while pursuing his master’s degree in sports administration. In fact, when he’s not on the court, he is in the midst of writing his master’s thesis.

In 2019, Johnson was drafted by the Minnesota Timberwolves as the 11th overall pick and was quickly traded to the Suns. In his first professional appearance, he came off the bench to help the Suns defeat the Los Angeles Lakers. He made his first start less than a year later, also against the Lakers. Two years later, he is continuing to make a name for himself, and the sisters in Coraopolis are hoping he’ll come home for a visit soon.

“Cam’s mom is still our school nurse at OLSH,” said Sr. Francine, “so we hear all about him. We hope he’ll stop in to see us. We’re so proud of him.”

FELICIAN SISTERS



An Excerpt from
**CANTICLE
 OF THE CREATURES**

Praised be you, my Lord
 with all your creatures,
 especially Sir Brother Sun,
 who is the day through whom
 you bring us light.

And he is lovely, shining
 with great splendor,
 for he heralds you, Most High.

Praised be you, my Lord,
 through Sister Moon and Stars.
 In heaven you have formed them,
 lightsome and precious and fair.

And praised be you, my Lord,
 through Brother Wind, through
 air and cloud, through calm
 and every weather by which
 you sustain your creatures.

Praised be you, my Lord,
 through Sister Water,
 so very useful and humble,
 precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord
 through Brother Fire,
 by whom you light up
 the night, and he is
 handsome and merry,
 robust and strong.

Praised be you, my Lord,
 through our Sister, Mother Earth,
 who sustains us and directs us
 bringing forth all kinds of fruits
 and colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be you, my Lord
 through those who forgive
 for your love
 and who bear sickness and trial.

Combined Creations:
Saint Francis of Assisi by Cimabue.
 Stained glass depiction of
The Canticle of the Creatures
 by Sr. Mary Ann Therese Kelly

Our Franciscan Heritage

By Sr. Suzanne Marie Kush | Provincial Councilor, Co-President of the Franciscan Federation and Franciscan Pilgrimage Program Staff

We have perhaps all seen the iconography of St. Francis of Assisi surrounded by animals — he is, after all, the patron saint of ecology — but this is only one expression of the essential elements of his teachings. At the heart of Franciscan spirituality is an emphasis on the boundless love of God, building relationships, a dedication to the gospel, respect for all of creation and a desire to surrender to God’s will.

The Felician Sisters are a Franciscan community, following the Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. Felician Foundress Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska called on her sisters to live as St. Francis had lived — in simplicity and humility; in reverence for all God’s creation; as living examples of the gospel message; and in compassionately caring for and serving the marginalized and those living in poverty.

In one of his letters, St. Francis wrote, “O how happy and blessed are those who love the Lord and do as the Lord himself said in the gospel: *You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul, and your neighbor as yourself.*” He asked no more of his followers than he asked of himself — to live according to the gospel.

Franciscan theology emphasizes the unconditional love of God. The focus is not on sin, but on the goodness of God and our own personal goodness because we are made in the image of God. Francis expressed this belief through respect for the dignity of creation — without bias.

From the moment in the San Damiano Chapel when God called on him to “rebuild my Church,” St. Francis was ready to surrender to God’s will. This was the beginning of a life of service discerned through contemplation.

Contemplation allows for an awareness of the mysterious presence of God within us and how God is present in our daily lives. After all, we cannot do God’s will if we don’t listen with the ear of the heart — as Francis did.

For both St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, the focus of their contemplation was the cross of San Damiano. In a letter to St. Agnes, St. Clare tells her, “O most noble Queen, gaze upon [Him], consider [Him], contemplate [Him], as you desire to imitate [Him] ... To gaze upon the Crucified Christ is to see ourselves, others and the world with a deep, penetrating vision — to see the truth of things in their relation to God.”

By contemplating the mystery of the cross, we come to a greater awareness of the world’s pain. Francis saw the inequality of the highly-structured social hierarchy in Assisi. He saw those individuals who had no land, the

Conversion

Surrender to God and God’s service

Contemplation

Prayer that flows from the depths of an inner life

Poverty

Embracing an attitude of poverty

Minority

Solidarity with the poor

poor and the lepers, and he was inspired to live among them. What stirred within him was a desire to make a difference in the lives of the people who surrounded him. He responded to the needs of the times with an overflowing compassion and mercy for God’s people, expressed through service to the needy and the marginalized.

Francis strove to live simply, in solidarity with the poor, so that he could identify with them, and to change the hearts of all by sharing God’s boundless love. He cared not only for

their physical needs, but also for their salvation, seeking to turn hearts and minds toward the ways of God.

Consider the story of St. Francis and the wolf. Francis finds himself in a town that is being terrorized by a wolf who is killing people and animals. The people are afraid to go outside the walls of the town. They carry weapons and throw rocks to scare off the wolf. Both sides are acting out of fear, and the result is chaos — until St. Francis steps in.

St. Francis goes into the forest to meet the wolf on his own terms. He goes without fear or judgment and simply asks the wolf,

“Why?” He finds out that the wolf is hungry and afraid of the people. All he wants is enough to eat.

Francis brings about reconciliation between the townspeople and the wolf. They agree to feed the wolf and not hurt him, and the wolf agrees not to harm the people or livestock. They reach an understanding and build a relationship of mutual respect. Fear is replaced by love and understanding, and the result is harmony.

On the surface, this is a lovely tale about St. Francis communing with nature, but it also strikes upon many fundamental elements of Franciscan spirituality — perhaps

most notably minority and conversion.

Minority is a humble acceptance that we are one with all of creation. For Francis, there is no difference between himself and the wolf. The people have no more right to the land than the wolf does and his needs are equally important.

Conversion refers to a change of heart, which both the wolf and the townspeople experience after St. Francis’ intervention. He built a relationship between them, and they now live together in peace.

Francis was inspired to live among those that society had cast aside. He accompanied them, recognizing that in order to serve them, he needed to know them and build relationships with them. He did not distinguish between the rich and the poor, the healthy and the leper — they were all God’s children and therefore all worthy of compassion.

Conversion is a life-long process of self-reflection, renewal and transformation that is essential to Franciscan spirituality. Toward the end of his life, St. Francis wrote, “I have done what was mine to do, may Christ now teach you what you are to do.”

ALL THINGS OF CREATION ARE CHILDREN OF THE FATHER AND THUS BROTHERS OF MAN.
— St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis addressed the needs of his time by caring for the poor, lepers and outcasts — the marginalized of society. Blessed Mary Angela followed his example, caring for the orphans and widows on the streets of Warsaw, and she called upon her sisters to do the same.

The Felician Sisters were not founded to serve in just one ministry. They were founded to serve in whatever ministry is needed at the time and to evolve with the needs of the time. In the spirit of St. Francis and Blessed Mary Angela, we continue to listen with the ears of our hearts to the calling of God and to answer his call. 🌸



ADVOCATING FOR THE MARGINALIZED

A Consumer’s Role in Human Trafficking

Sr. Mary Jean Sliwinski Provincial Sustainability Coordinator

Have you ever looked at the label on a product you were purchasing? When you saw where it was from, did you wonder how those who made it are treated or paid, or how they live?

Often, we don’t give our purchases a second thought. We buy what we want and go home. Yet, there are real lives behind those labels — parents, children and families trying to make a living, trying to survive and, more often than not, under conditions far more difficult than we will ever experience. Many are victims of human trafficking.

In *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*, Pope Francis says, “Among so many open wounds in our world, one of the most troubling is the trade in human beings, a modern form of slavery, which violates the God-given dignity of so many of our brothers and sisters.” All of us are called to become aware of this oppressive reality and take action.

Human trafficking and modern slavery are painful realities in our world today. Individuals who are struggling financially or with immigration or legal issues are offered opportunities for work that promise generous pay, housing and help obtaining citizenship. When they arrive, however, their personal papers are confiscated, and they are suddenly in debt. Lured by the promise of a better life, they find themselves trapped.

Over 170 members of the Investor Alliance for Human Rights (IAHR) are using their voices in an effort to curb human trafficking on a global scale, and the Felician Sisters of North America (FSNA) is one of them. IAHR is an

organization of institutional investors that is engaging corporations to become more active in their responsibility to workers in their supply chains by identifying and eliminating human trafficking. IAHR also engages companies on the World Wide Web, calling on them to take responsibility for content posted on their sites and not harbor sexual exploitation, especially of women and children.

FSNA is also making efforts to purchase products with our provincial label from responsible sources. Admittedly, this is not easy as forced and trafficked labor are so prevalent in our world today, but there are some resources available to help consumers find information on companies’ supply chains and labor policies, such as the Fair Labor Association, WRAP Program and Know the Chain. You might be surprised how your favorite brands rate. The 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery produced by the International Labour Organization and Walk Free Foundation reported there are **40 million victims of modern slavery throughout the world with women and girls comprising 71%** of them.

It may be shocking, but this is a problem close to home, too. The Global Slavery Index 2018 compiled by Walk Free estimates that on any given day in 2016, there were **403,000 people living in conditions of modern slavery in the United States**, the majority of them in domestic work, agriculture, traveling sales crews and restaurants or food services.

In addition to labor trafficking, sexual exploitation is more prevalent than one might think, especially surrounding events like the Super Bowl and online,

VICTIMS OF MODERN DAY SLAVERY



where child pornography has become a major business.

Consumers should know about products produced in other countries that are most at risk of involving modern slavery. Laptops and mobile phones produced in China and Malaysia, and clothing made in Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand top the list. The seafood industry and mining for precious metals needed in the production of electronics also often utilize child labor. 🌿

We can make a difference, but we must take action.

- **Investigate products** you buy and the companies that make them, and make informed, ethical decisions as a consumer and an investor.
- **Petition companies** that are not transparent about their labor practices to make ethical choices.
- **Educate yourself** about the dangers of sex trade on the Internet so we can better protect children and young adults.
- **Pray for victims**, that they will find comfort and strength in the Lord.
- **Pray for perpetrators**, that they may realize the suffering their actions cause and end this cruel and inhumane practice.

For resources, including a link to Pope Francis’ Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking, visit FelicianSistersNA.org/SocialJustice.



What is MY Role in Creation?

"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

- DR. MARIA MONTESSORI

Photography by Rick Armstrong

Every one of God's creations has a job to do. Immersed in the beautiful natural setting of their Enfield, CT, campus, surrounded by wildlife and trees, students of the Enfield Montessori School have the space to explore and discover their role in the care of creation.

In 1965, Felician Sisters Mary Aniela Urbanek and Mary Anastasia Holak planted a special seed in Connecticut when they founded the Enfield Montessori School. Little did they know that 56 years later, this ministry they started with two teachers and one classroom would be educating over 180 children each year, instilling them with Felician values.

For more than ten years, Cliona Beaulieu has been head of school at Enfield Montessori and Chiaravalle Academy, the program for students in grades 7 and 8. As the only Catholic Montessori school in Connecticut and

western Massachusetts, Beaulieu takes great pride in the knowledge that they are educating the whole child — intellectually, physically, psychologically and spiritually — and she does it all with reverence to the school's Felician founders, whom she describes as "absolutely ahead of their time."

The Felician and Franciscan spirituality seem to be a natural fit for the Catholic Montessori experience. "Part of the premise of a Montessori education is the care for the environment," says Beaulieu. "With the younger children, we talk a lot about care for the self and care for the environment — with the idea that if you can teach the children respectful, compassionate behavior toward the plants in their environment, the animals in their environment and the people in their environment, that it will translate to the greater community. The hope becomes that at some point the child says, 'What's my role? What is it that I need to do?'"

For middle-school Montessori students, the focus is on education with purpose — again with a close connection to care for creation. For the students in Enfield, this means planting pollinator and vegetable gardens, building bat houses and designing a rain barrel system for gathering water — and this year, the parents helped refurbish a building to accommodate a chicken coop.

While the children enjoy collecting and selling eggs and learning to manage the money, Beaulieu is more impressed by another change.

"When the students arrive at school in the morning, they can pull on their boots, make sure there's food and water in the coops and get back to class in time for prayer,"

she said. "You find them now getting to school 15 to 20 minutes earlier because they want to go see their chickens."

Plans are also underway to add some pottery wheels and a kiln to the building housing the coop and a second building has been acquired in the hopes of transforming it into a greenhouse.

"Adolescents have these brilliant minds and this capacity to absorb vast pieces of knowledge that we never really have the capacity to absorb again in our lives," says Beaulieu. "So often the middle-school experience is difficult for children because there isn't enough to fill their minds. By introducing children to an environment where there is a lot of purpose and a lot of responsibility and care for the environment, we fill their minds up in great ways."

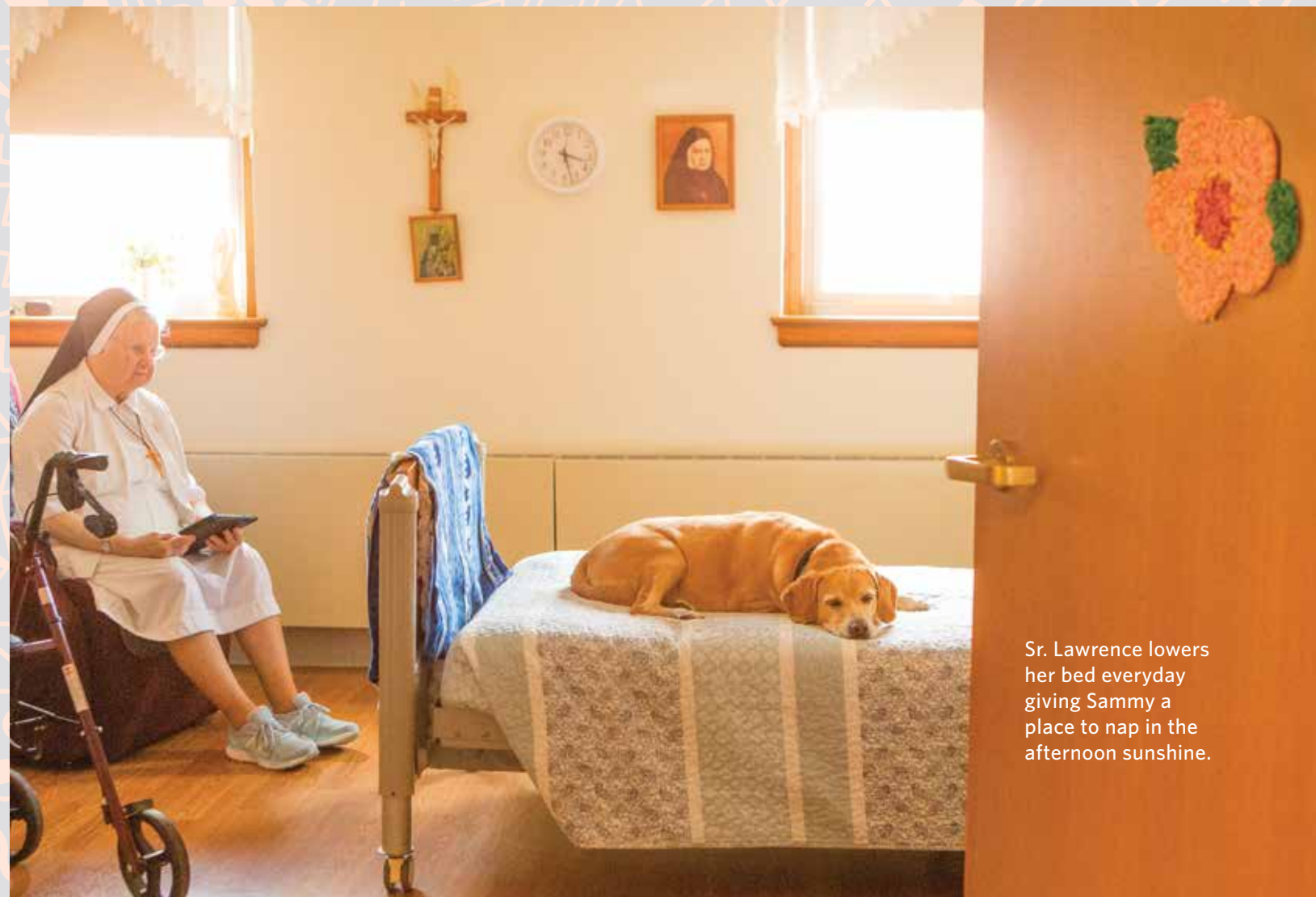
Beaulieu clearly loves this school community and the Felician Sisters who have embraced her. She is dedicated to ensuring that the Felician mission and values are instilled in every student. By educating the whole



child, recognizing their unique gifts and tailoring an education to feed those gifts, she hopes to teach children to "be an asset to your community, whatever that community is." 🌻



Unconditional Love



Sr. Lawrence lowers her bed everyday giving Sammy a place to nap in the afternoon sunshine.

Photography by Rick Armstrong

Imagine you are a person with dementia trying to communicate. You struggle for words and when you find them, you're misunderstood or asked to repeat yourself. Often people in this situation give up trying to speak entirely.

Now imagine there is someone who listens to you attentively and patiently, without judgment. They never correct you, never make you

repeat yourself, never ignore you or give up on you — they just listen. This is what the sisters at Our Lady of Angels Convent in Enfield, CT, have found in Sammy.

Sr. Nancy Marie Pieciewicz adopted Sammy, a rescue dog she described as a Lab-Retriever-Beagle mix, when he was just a puppy and started bringing him with her to work in the convent's care center. Today she jokes that the sisters are more

attached to him than they are to her. "He gets greeted first. In the morning, it's 'Hello, Sammy!' and 'Oh, hello, Sister.'"

According to Sr. Nancy, Sammy's presence is particularly comforting to the sisters who have difficulty speaking, especially those with dementia. "The sisters will talk to him, and he'll just sit there and listen," she said. "Because he doesn't correct them, they gain confidence."

One sister who is unable to actively communicate but can read aloud waits for Sammy each day and recites her prayers to him. "He always waits until she's done," said Sr. Nancy.

Many of the sisters have made accommodations to their rooms or routines to make Sammy feel welcome. Some even make sure their beds are lowered so Sammy can hop up without trouble. "I've seen sisters cover him with a blanket so he doesn't get cold," said Sr. Nancy. "Sr. Lawrence had hip surgery, and I remember walking into her room one day and asking, 'Why are you in a chair and Sammy's in the bed?' And she said, 'Well, I wanted him to be comfortable.'"

After nine years as part of the family, Sammy has pretty much free rein of the facility. "He goes from room to room with the sisters. He knows who will allow him on the bed. He's even figured out when maintenance has their break in the morning," said Sr. Nancy. "He just wants to be with everybody. He'll wait for the elevator or find his way down the stairs. He's been wonderful therapy for everyone."

Sammy is also exceptionally perceptive. "When a sister is dying, he's the first one to know," said Sr. Nancy. "There was a sister whose room he would never go

into, and suddenly one day he went in wouldn't leave. She died later that day. I believe Sammy knew and wanted to stay by her side."

Sammy is the third dog the convent has had since Sr. Nancy arrived over 30 years ago. "I realized early on the value of pet therapy," she said. She is quick to admit, however, that Sammy is extra special.

Now that Sr. Nancy has relocated to the Provincial House in Beaver Falls, PA, to begin her role as a provincial councilor, Sammy has become a commuter, going home each night with a care-center aide. Though Sr. Nancy misses him, she couldn't justify taking him away from the sisters who love him. Instead, Sammy will continue serving as a companion to those who need him most.



A lifelong animal lover, Irene Meuritta knows the importance of the bond between a dog and its owner. Meuritta is a Felician Associate — a lay person deeply involved with the sisters in their mission. She lives in Pomona, CA, and began accompanying the sisters from the Angela Spirituality Center in visiting homeless people nearby. **At first she was fearful of the homeless, but soon came to understand they were ordinary people who had been through life-changing experiences. They only wanted someone to talk to, and the sisters listened without judgment.**

One day, they visited with a woman who lived in her car and offered the woman a bagged lunch. Meuritta said she heard the sound of a dog in the back of the car and realized homeless people have pets, and their pets are hungry, too.

After that day, Meuritta began collecting bags of dog food and bringing them on the visits. She eventually brought leashes, collars and toys — she has even taken a few animals to see a vet.

For a person without a home, the companionship of an animal is extremely important — the relationship with the pet may be all they have in the world. Supporting that pet helps support the person. Meuritta describes one cold night finding a man sitting outside on the steps of a shelter with a puppy in his lap. "They wouldn't let him take his dog inside, so he stayed out in the cold with the dog," she said.

Meuritta enjoys being a Felician Associate accompanying the sisters, bringing unconditional love and bagged lunches to homeless people and the pets that accompany them without judgment, on a difficult journey.

If you would like to join the Felician Sisters in their mission by becoming an Associate, visit [FelicianSistersNA.org/Associates](https://www.FelicianSistersNA.org/Associates).

THE VERY PRESENCE OF A PET CAN HELP REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF DEMENTIA — ANXIETY, AGITATION, IRRITABILITY, DEPRESSION, AND LONELINESS. THEIR FRIENDLY, NON-THREATENING WAY HELPS PATIENTS BE MORE INTERACTIVE, WHEN SOMETIMES THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO BE IN SOCIAL SETTINGS WITH OTHER ADULTS.

— Kathleen Allen, LCSW, C-ASWCM, Eldercare Consultant

BREAKING DOWN Barriers

Photo by Karen Varnas



In 2013, Detroit was the most distressed major city in the United States, with 35% of the population living below the poverty level. Watching the city's historic bankruptcy unfold from 20 miles away, a group of Felician Sisters in Livonia, MI, felt called to do something to help.

The sisters wrote a proposal for their ministry, which they called *Deo Gratias* (Thanks be to God), a phrase associated with the patron of the Felician Sisters, St. Felix of Cantalice, and began spending time visiting Detroit. True to their Franciscan roots, the sisters were determined to live among the people they would serve, no matter the risk, to better identify with them and make a difference in their lives.

As they met those struggling with homelessness, poverty and food insecurity, they quickly learned that earning the trust of the community wouldn't be easy. The streets were tough, and people were guarded. They also realized that living within a high-crime area like Detroit would make them vulnerable, so they requested permission to get a dog for protection.

The sisters began scouring animal-rescue sites and God's providence was at work. Each sister's computer search landed on the same dog — a female Husky-Shepherd mix named Takaari.

Sr. Mary Francis Lewandowski and Sr. Rita Marie Vondra were the first to move into their house in southwest Detroit. Ministry and logistical delays with the other sisters

meant that Sr. Francis spent much of the first few months alone. She was nervous, but with Takaari at her side, she began to walk around the neighborhood.

While Takaari most certainly gave her a sense of security, Sr. Francis also found people were drawn in by the dog. "They would talk to *her* first," Sr. Francis said. Eventually, as she saw the same faces during her daily walks, the people who had seemed shy or reluctant to engage with her began to open up through Takaari. "She helped us begin to build relationships."

St. Francis' reverence for all creation rested in acknowledging and honoring each element's unique role. Chosen for one purpose — protection — it soon became clear to the sisters that Takaari's true role was much more than that. As they grew their *Deo Gratias* ministry, opening a community garden and the evangelization cafe that was Sr. Felicity Marie Madigan's dream, Takaari broke down barriers with her canine charm.

"I WAS REALLY DEPRESSED, FEELING BAD AND REALLY HAD NO ONE TO TALK TO, BUT THESE SISTERS WELCOMED ME SO MUCH WITH OPEN ARMS,"

one neighborhood resident recalled of the impact the sisters had on her. "They really make you feel so welcome, like you've known them a long time."

A few years ago, a shepherd named Skylar came to live with the sisters. She accompanies Sr. Felicity and Sr. Shelley Marie Jeffrey, co-directors of *Deo Gratias*, as their four-legged relationship builder. "We have made them part of the ministry and part of our community," said Sr. Francis. "We like to talk about the story of Francis and the wolf. That story is so much like ours. We take our 'wolf' into the city and bring people together." 🌸



Caring for God's Creatures

Photography by Sr. Mary Samuel Holowacz

Resident photographer and creature caretaker, Sr. Samuel Holowacz enjoys the rich natural setting of Mother of Good Counsel Convent in Chicago, IL.

The sisters have made deliberate choices to create a campus that invites communion with nature. Sections of their gardens are reserved for milkweed and indigenous wildflowers to attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Bat houses, bird houses and squirrel feeders also draw wildlife in for a visit. To support bee populations, the sisters have also invited local residents to keep beehives on their grounds, who share the honey they collect with the sisters.



Shining Light in Dark Places

Sr. Maryann Agnes Mueller

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Coordinator

Even before she was called to religious life, Sr. Maryann Agnes Mueller was engaged in social justice. As a member of Pax Christi, USA, a Catholic movement founded at the end of World War II to bring peace and reconciliation to the world, she felt strongly about the dignity and value of every human life.

Today, as social justice coordinator for Our Lady of Hope Province, Sr. Maryann has marched in demonstrations and led forums and is one of the founding members of the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking.

“It’s important for the Felician Sisters to take a stand on issues in our world that demean other human beings — racism, human trafficking, gun violence. If we don’t speak out, then we are not doing what we were called to do,” she said.

Photo by Rick Armstrong



Unfortunately, human trafficking is more common than any of us might think. Sr. Maryann said often when she is giving a presentation on the topic, someone will raise their hand and say that it doesn’t happen where they live. “It happens everywhere,” she said, “nail salons, hair salons, restaurants, hotels, farms, domestic workers in private homes. They aren’t paid. They’re forced to work long hours. If they’re new to our country, their papers are taken away so they are trapped.”

Sr. Maryann explained that human traffickers prey on victims of natural disasters, immigrants, people with disabilities and of course children and teenagers.

“All teenagers are vulnerable in some way,” she said. “Traffickers will go to a high school football game and look for girls sitting away from the crowd and target them. They’ll act as a love interest, and it goes on from there.” Sr. Maryann also pointed to teenagers aging out of the foster care system. “When they get out of foster care at 18, where are they to go? The day they leave foster care many are trafficked, because who else is there for them?”

Even the pandemic has had an impact on the trafficking of children. With the schools closed and children online, some for the first time, they are falling prey to luring and victimization. **Calls to the Center for Missing and Exploited Children have tripled since last year.**

In her fourth year of serving as social justice coordinator, Sr. Maryann was one of 15 sisters engaged in anti-trafficking efforts invited to Washington, D.C., for a conference on Catholic initiatives, and to attend then President Obama’s forum on human trafficking. During their time together, the sisters decided to unite as women religious focused on raising awareness, providing resources and supporting survivors.

In 2016 they formed U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT), a nonprofit

organization with more than 100 women religious members. “It’s one of the things I’m most proud of,” Sr. Maryann said, “proud that the Felician Sisters are founding members of this group, and we’re very active.”

The organization took over the **Stop Trafficking!** monthly newsletter launched in 2003 by the Sisters of the Divine Savior and Capacitar International, and in 2020 Sr. Maryann was asked to take over the demanding task of managing the newsletter. “I was in chapel asking God for guidance on the task, and He put it in my lap. I prayed that with each issue of the newsletter, one person would be saved from being a victim.”

Sr. Maryann’s leadership and example inspire many other Felician Sisters in their own social justice work. Sr. Maria Louise Edwards, vice-president of *Águilas del Desierto* (Eagles of the Desert), a nonprofit dedicated to rescuing and recovering remains of migrants trying to cross the southern border, said, “The whole reason I’m involved with *Águilas* is because of Sr. Maryann. She works hard to make sure that our Felician community is educated about issues of social injustice. She draws us right into the places where God’s grace is most needed. That is living our Franciscan call to be with God in the midst of our sometimes messy and confusing humanity.”

Sr. Judith Marie Blizzard who recently participated in a march against racial injustice, agreed. “I love how invested she is in the ministry of peace and justice,” said Sr. Judy. “Her passion is obvious and contagious when she shares with the sisters about particular issues and our responsibility in making a difference. She makes it easier for us to get involved and to have our say with our state representatives.”



A pen can be a beacon when strategically left in places trafficking typically occurs, quietly bearing the National Human Trafficking Hotline.*

Sr. Maryann said there are ways all of us can fight human trafficking. “First, we need to be aware. If something doesn’t look right, or feel right, call the human trafficking hotline. It’s better to call and be wrong than not to call at all.”

She described a case in Philadelphia involving a woman who always went to the same nail salon, striking up a conversation with the nail technicians. “The workers always chatted with the customer unless one particular woman came. Then they would shut down and act differently.” After witnessing the behavior a few times, the customer called the hotline and uncovered a human trafficking ring at the salon.

Sr. Maryann encourages parents and guardians to keep an eye on children’s technology use.

“I always say if you have someone under 18 in your house, you need to see what’s on their computer and on their cell phone. It’s not an invasion of privacy; you are protecting them.”

The work that Sr. Maryann and so many others do is critical; however, human trafficking will only be wiped out when it’s no longer profitable. **“Until there is legislation that decreases**

the profit and increases the risk to the perpetrator, nothing will change,” she warned. **“That’s what we need to work toward.”**

Even so, Sr. Maryann has room in her heart for the traffickers, too. “Mother Angela had compassion even for those who are difficult to care about, those that we might consider our enemy. Because I’m a Felician I ask myself what would Mother Angela do? What would St. Francis do?” 🌿

* To receive a few pens that you can leave behind to share the trafficking hotline, email feliciansisters@feliciansisters.org

To learn more and read the *Stop Trafficking!* newsletter, visit SistersAgainstTrafficking.org.



Beyond Beatification

The Cause for Sainthood

Sr. Mary Ambrose Wozniak
Provincial Coordinator for the Cause for Sainthood

Sr. Ambrose passed away on October 20, 2021, prior to the publication of this article. May Blessed Mary Angela welcome her into eternal peace.

All Christians are called to be saints. Saints are persons in heaven (officially canonized or not), who lived heroically virtuous lives, offered their life for others, or were martyred for the faith, and who are worthy of imitation. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

On January 4, 1984, a Vatican-certified miracle happened. As Lillian Halasinki sat in the living room of her home in Dunkirk, NY, crying out in unbearable pain, she prayed to Felician Foundress Mary Angela Truskowska, begging for her intercession — and was instantaneously healed.

Halasinki had been diagnosed with diabetic neuropathy, an incurable condition that caused extreme pain and swelling in her leg. Doctors had been unable to give her any relief, she couldn't walk on her own and they were considering amputation. Sitting at home, no prospect of relief in sight, Halasinki prayed to Mary Angela, as she had done every day for months. Suddenly, she felt a peaceful presence and the smell of flowers filled the room — and the pain stopped.

No medical explanation could be found for Lillian Halasinki's instantaneous cure. The neuropathy was gone, she had no pain and she was walking on her own. After months of intense investigation and extensive testing, the Vatican officially approved the event as a miracle attributed to Mary Angela's intercession.

Having been credited with a certified miracle, on April 18, 1993, Saint Pope John Paul II beatified Mother Mary Angela, elevating her to the status of Blessed, saying, "Blessed Mary Angela's life was marked with love. She was concerned about all people: those hungry for bread, the heartbroken, the homeless, and those hungering for the truth of the Gospel."

In order for Blessed Mary Angela to be elevated to sainthood, a second miracle must be attributed to her intercession. A second claim of a miracle in Blessed Mary Angela's name was made in 2012, but it was not certified by the Vatican. Though many reports of favors granted on her behalf have been shared with the Felician Sisters, there are strict standards that must be met for consideration of a miracle and the recipient of the miracle must be willing to participate in the process.

The Felician Sisters have been working toward their foundress's canonization since 1949, when they began the investigation that led to her pronouncement as Venerable Servant of God, Mary Angela Truskowska, the first step toward becoming a saint. The honor was bestowed upon her after a recognition by the Vatican that she had "lived a heroically virtuous life" (USCCB).

Blessed Mary Angela Truskowska was not only the foundress of the Felician Sisters, she was also a pioneer of social services, an advocate for the vulnerable and a trailblazer for contemplative-active women religious. Always discerning God's will, she devoted her life to service of the marginalized — providing shelter to orphans and widows, educating women and girls and caring for the sick and injured, without bias or exception.

The path to sainthood is not an easy one. It is fraught with outreach, research, investigation and documentation. In North America, these efforts are led by Sr. Mary Ambrose Wozniak, provincial coordinator for the cause, who leads a committee of eight Felician Sisters in different geographic regions of the United States and Canada who are responsible for distributing resources, fielding questions

The Path to Sainthood

The process has changed many times throughout history. At one point, sainthood could be granted by popular opinion. Bishops held the authority to elevate a person to sainthood for a while, but now, the decision lies with the pope and involves three stages of elevation.

Step 1: Venerable

Typically, a person is not considered for sainthood until five years after their death — although this waiting period can be waived by the pope. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), once the waiting period has passed, a person may be become a Venerable if they are "recognized formally by the pope as having lived a heroically virtuous life or offered their life."

Step 2: Blessed

The next step is beatification — a process that grants a Venerable the title of Blessed. In order for this to happen, a miracle must be attributed to the intercession of the Venerable — and this miracle must be investigated and affirmed by the Vatican as scientifically unexplainable.

Step 3: Saint

Canonization — which officially elevates a Blessed to a Saint — requires that a second miracle be attributed to the candidate. Again, it must be investigated and affirmed by the Vatican.

and recording reports of favors and claims of miracles. "People who have a devotion have received 'favors,'" said Sr. Ambrose, "but a miracle is different. It has to be an instantaneous healing."

Much of the work of Sr. Ambrose and her committee is outreach — making sure people know who Blessed Mary Angela is and how to pray to her. They distribute medals, holy cards, and publications and reach out through their ministries and everyday encounters. If there are claims of miracles, they report them to Sr. Danat Marie Brysch, Felician Sisters minister general, who is based in Rome, Italy.

Sr. Mary Justice Przybocki, regional promoter for the cause of Blessed Mary Angela for southwestern Pennsylvania, tells the story of a young man whose mother reached out to the Felician Sisters for prayers when he was diagnosed with cancer at age 4. "We prayed to Blessed Mary Angela for him and continue to ask for her intervention. I even put his name at the foot of her statue." Recently, Sr. Justice received a card from Elliott, now age 9, and his family saying that he is "fully recovered."

Though there is still work to be done for Blessed Mary Angela to be canonized, in the hearts of her spiritual daughters — the Felician Sisters — she is already a saint. "Anything she did, she did for the love of God," said Sr. Justice. "Look at where we've come. We could not be here if God hadn't blessed it."

Sr. Ambrose added, "The seed she planted in Warsaw has germinated and blossomed into service across the globe. I don't think she ever thought about becoming a saint when she was living, but as she looked after her sisters in her lifetime, she continues to look after all of us." ✨

Sr. Ambrose passed away before the publication of this article. Her passionate leadership of the cause for Blessed Mary Angela's canonization is just one of the blessings she bestowed upon us. She will be lovingly remembered by all those whose lives she touched with her gentle and endearing presence. May she rest in eternal peace with her beloved Lord and Savior.

Read about Blessed Mary Angela Truskowska

On Earth as in Heaven: the Life Story of Blessed Mary Angela Truskowska, Foundress of the Felician Sisters
by Marie Joann Lewko

An Ordinary Life Lived in an Extraordinary Way Reflective Readings, Blessed Mary Angela Truskowska
by Reverend Jan D. Szczurek,
Sr. Mary Cynthia Strzalkowski, et al.

So, you've thought about life as a religious sister
— or someone has suggested you think about it.
What now?

How does the
journey begin?

An Invitation to Discern Life as a Felician Sister of North America

Have you been carrying a secret in your heart? Do you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you toward religious life? The first step in exploring the possibility of becoming a sister is called *Inquiry*, and it's as simple as an email or phone call to a vocation team member who at one time in her life felt just as you do now.

Find your unique path through discernment. Prayerfully seeking God's plan for your life is called *discernment*. When you dedicate time to consider the path you are meant to take, you will be surprised at the answers you'll receive. Volunteering with one of our ministries can help you know for sure. The Felician Sisters are in active ministry across the continent, serving the homeless, protecting nature, supporting people with disabilities and more.

The modern Felician Sister embodies compassion and capability. While society's needs are always evolving — from the time of our foundress Blessed Mary Angela in 1855 to the birth of our North American ministry in 1874 — the Felician spirit of boundless love and compassionate service remains the same. Today's world requires us not only to be selfless, but also educated leaders who can oversee ministries in the spirit of compassion. Your unique experience and skills may be exactly what our future ministries need to achieve miraculous outcomes.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS? HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
HOW WILL I KNOW? IS THERE SOMEONE TO HELP?



Chicago formation house located in Hyde Park.

Photos by Rick Armstrong

FORMATION PROCESS

Formation is a six-step process through which you explore, learn and determine if becoming a Felician Sister is your path in life.

1 INQUIRY I'm curious.

During the Inquiry stage, you will spend time discovering if God is truly calling you to religious life. Vocation Director Sr. Judith M. Blizzard can help you discern your path and offer spiritual guidance on the journey. You may be invited to join us in a prayer experience or discernment group or to stay at our discernment house in Pennsylvania.

2 CANDIDACY I'd like to get to know you better. 6 months - 2 years

If you discover through the Inquiry stage that becoming a Felician Sister feels right, you can submit a formal request for *Candidacy*. You will then join the sisters in prayer, ministry and conversation, while you continue to live on your own and participate in your chosen profession or volunteer service.

3 POSTULANCY I'm moving in. 1 - 2 years

If the Candidate phase reassures you that you're on the right path, you can petition to become a *Postulant* and live in community at our formation house. You will have opportunities to meet the sisters and visit ministries throughout the province. You'll also complete a yearlong course of study covering Felician spirituality, faith and spiritual development, community life and the history of the congregation, and begin to serve in a variety of ministries.

4 NOVITIATE Call me "Sister." 2 years

This stage is a time of personal growth and deepening your prayer life and relationship with Jesus. You will receive a religious name and the title "Sister." As a *Novice* you will wear the Felician religious habit. You will live in the formation house, under the guidance of the director of novices, and continue to experience community life.

5 TEMPORARY PROFESSION OF VOWS I'm ready to say "Yes."

During the time of *Temporary Profession*, you will profess your vows for a period of one year, and renew them each year for up to six years. You'll live in several different Felician communities and be involved in ministries as you continue to explore the various opportunities available to you.

6 PERPETUAL PROFESSION OF VOWS I belong here.

After several years of professing your temporary vows, when you finally know that God has called you to be a Felician Sister, you will make your *Perpetual Profession*, a sacred commitment to dedicate the rest of your life in service to God and the Church. You will begin and continue this new life with a mind open to the Will of God and a heart filled with compassion for all those you serve. The entire process can take 6-9 years.



I AM A RETREAT DIRECTOR



I AM AN ARCHIVIST



I AM A SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR



I AM A NURSING STUDENT



I AM A VOCATION DIRECTOR

and
I AM A FELICIAN SISTER.

Are you thinking about life as a sister?
We would ♥ to talk.

Call Sr. Judy at 734-718-0632 or email us at Vocations@FelicianSisters.org.

Take a virtual tour of our formation house and Mother of Good Counsel Convent at our YouTube channel. Find the link and learn more at [FelicianSistersNA.org/Vocations](https://www.FelicianSistersNA.org/Vocations)

BLESSED MARY ANGELA INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPLATION, ACTION AND TRANSFORMATION Examining Social Issues Through Listening



Ingrid Dul, Director of the Blessed Mary Angela Institute with her predecessor, SM Annelise Velivis.

The power and endurance of Blessed Mary Angela’s mission is built upon seeing those in need through the eyes of compassion, not disdain. Today, nearly 170 years since founding the Felician Sisters, the Blessed Mary Angela Institute for Contemplation, Action and Transformation practices the same tenet to address contemporary issues.

The Institute was established in 2015 through an endowment provided by the Felician Sisters to respond to society’s needs and concerns through contemplative dialogue. Sr. Annelise Velivis led the institute until last year.

“It was created with the idea of adapting what Blessed Mary Angela did in her time with the issues of today, while raising awareness, compassion and action in our Felician University students and our community,” Sr. Annelise said.

One of the first topics Sr. Annelise tackled was human trafficking and she invited a survivor to speak at the university. The young woman had been targeted at a fast-food restaurant with the promise of travel, money, and assurances that she would be taken care of. “What struck me was that her escape was hindered by authorities,” Sr. Annelise remembered. “They wouldn’t believe what she told them.” During her presentation, the audience also learned that the victim had been a Felician University student before her victimization.

When Sr. Annelise stepped down as director, Ingrid Dul, an instructor at Felician University and member of the Institute advisory council, was named as her successor.

Dul explained, “To have a conversation that leads to action, we must listen to opinions that are different than our own. Only then can we address the issues and improve the situation. “That’s where the practice of contemplative dialogue plays a key role.

A lot of times we talk to get our point across, not to listen to others. When we open ourselves up to understanding others, we can contemplate what the issue really is,”Dul said.

Immigration has been a prominent topic in the past few years. “Some people support it, and some oppose it. Both sides have valid points. To deal with the issue in a productive manner, each side must consider the other side’s perspective,” she added.

Dul’s passion for restorative justice stems from her own experience with the challenges of immigrants and other marginalized populations. “There are hurdles they face to do simple things others take for granted.”

Born in Brazil, Dul came to the United States with her family when she was eight years old and lived as an undocumented immigrant. She felt like an American until she was sixteen. Since she didn’t have a Social Security card, she couldn’t get a job or driver’s license. “Every time you’re asked for ID, it’s embarrassing. It reminds you you’re not like everyone else.”

After high school, Dul applied and was accepted to her top college choice, but was crushed when she read the line, “admission contingent on proof of residency.” Then, she received a phone call that she almost didn’t answer. It was Felician University. She had been accepted into their program with a full scholarship. “I truly believe God was putting me on the path to where I now am,” she said.

Dul and the five-member Blessed Mary Angela Institute advisory team organize events open to the entire community. They recently collaborated with *Make the Road New Jersey*, a nonprofit that supports immigrants, working-class and Hispanic communities.

In March, the Institute hosted a panel featuring former New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey, the chief of police and the assistant prosecutor of Bergen County to discuss issues the formerly incarcerated face and how to help.

“Every year we try to focus on something new,” Dul said. Recent attention has centered on racism, particularly for Asians and Pacific Islanders. The Institute continues to foster contemplative dialogue with the community to inform future events.

Blessed Mary Angela believed in the dignity and worth of every person. The Blessed Mary Angela Institute exists to practice that belief and ensure each person is valued. ✨



How to Rebuild a Nation

Felician Sisters sent a team to assess the needs of the Haitian people after the 2010 earthquake. It was clear that more than food and water would be needed to rebuild this nation. Sr. Mary Christopher Moore, former provincial minister, wanted to do more. She asked Sr. Rose Marie Kujawa, then president of Madonna University, to explore the possibility of starting a satellite bachelor’s degree program. Eighteen months later, the Haitian Education Leadership Program (H.E.L.P.) was launched and built upon the foundation that each graduate uses the strategic, managerial and practical skills they gain to renew Haitian communities through meaningful change.

One of the first people she met was Yvon.

“Sr. Rose Marie said I could help my country by giving education to the Haitian people. Her idea was to build a new generation of leaders,” he recalled. Yvon received his degree in 2015, began managing the H.E.L.P. in Haiti and has since recruited six cohorts of students. “The program is a gift from heaven,” he said.

Photography by Rick Armstrong



FELICIAN HAITI INITIATIVES

Haiti is unlike other Asian and European countries where Madonna University had already established international learning programs. “We studied the culture and social challenges of Haiti and modified the program to address them,” said Sr. Rose Marie. Some of these adaptations included providing the courses online and stretching the two-year baccalaureate completion over eight terms to accommodate students working full time, single mothers juggling childcare, and the unpredictability of electricity and other erratic conditions in Haiti.

Applicants must have already completed two years of college, have a job, live in Haiti and speak English, but the highest hurdle for most of them is the expense. **H.E.L.P. receives over 100 applications each year, but current funding resources can only accommodate 25 students** since Madonna University and the Felician Sisters subsidize most of the cost. The continuation of the program relies solely on the support of donors. “If we could increase even to 30 students per year that would be wonderful,” Yvon said.

A challenge specific to Haitian women desiring an education is the culture which favors educating boys over girls. “There’s a lot of smart young girls in Haiti, but they don’t know their strength. They do not believe in themselves. If we give them a chance, we open doors for them, and Haiti will do better,” said recent H.E.L.P. graduate Vanessa.

Vanessa’s classmate, Fika, agreed: “We hope to serve as role models. Haitian women are hard workers, but they’re also limited in

“When I look to the sky, I see peace. I see hope. That’s Haiti.”

– Vanessa



education. Many women limit themselves to marriage and childbearing. We hope to show that they, too, can pursue higher education regardless of their social class, whether they’re single parents or young. Education is the key.”

H.E.L.P.’s goal to encourage graduates to use the Business Administration degree to improve the lives of their fellow Haitians is upheld by the strong sense of pride the Haitian people have for their country. “We are resilient,” Vanessa said, “[and] we always try to see the good in everything. There’s kidnapping and no electricity here. We know things are hard, but we are patient, and we have hope that one day it will change.”

Another H.E.L.P. graduate, Batlae, said, “We fought to get our independence. We were the first black nation to have our independence, so I am very proud of my nation’s history.” She also takes pride in her culture’s hospitality, saying, “We open our arms to receive people, to make sure they feel at home.”

The love students have for their country and their personal experience living in Haiti make them experts in developing ideas to best meet the needs of their communities. In the six years since Yvon earned his degree, he has sponsored the tuition of ten children in his community and teaches them about the importance of staying in school. **Recent graduates are working on various projects from establishing orphanages and shelters for the homeless, teaching English, and inspiring and supporting single mothers and young girls in remote villages to pursue an education.**

H.E.L.P. graduate Sibastian is focusing her efforts on something that limits access to the most basic resources. “If you want public services to reach people in the community, you need roads,” she said. Eleven years after the 2010 earthquake, there are still areas



“the more competent I become, the more efficient I will be at my work, and the better impact the job I’m doing will affect my community.”

– Sibastian

cut off by destroyed roadways. Sibastian and a group of Madonna University alumni have developed a grant proposal and budget to build roads and are currently seeking funding. She pointed out, “It doesn’t make any sense in this era for people to not be able to access clean water or food. Those are basic needs. In many places in Haiti, basic needs are luxuries.”

Madonna University’s demanding coursework prepares graduates to be savvy, experienced professionals, well-equipped to lead improvement initiatives. “It gives us exposure to critical thinking. We get to debate our peers and our professors. We learn tolerance because we learn to accept that everybody’s opinion is not always the same. Everyone’s way of doing things is different,” Fika explained.

When Sr. Rose Marie and Madonna University established H.E.L.P., they did not envision it as a simple program to deliver education, but an investment in the future of Haiti through the valuable efforts of their graduates. The bachelor’s degree they earn upon completion of the program is not the final goal — it’s just the beginning.

Sibastian agreed, saying, “It is the stepping-stone on which we stand to spread hope throughout our community.”

▶ **Watch An Education to Build a Nation, a short video featuring Madonna’s Haitian graduates at our YouTube channel. Find the link and learn more at FelicianSistersNA.org/Haiti.**



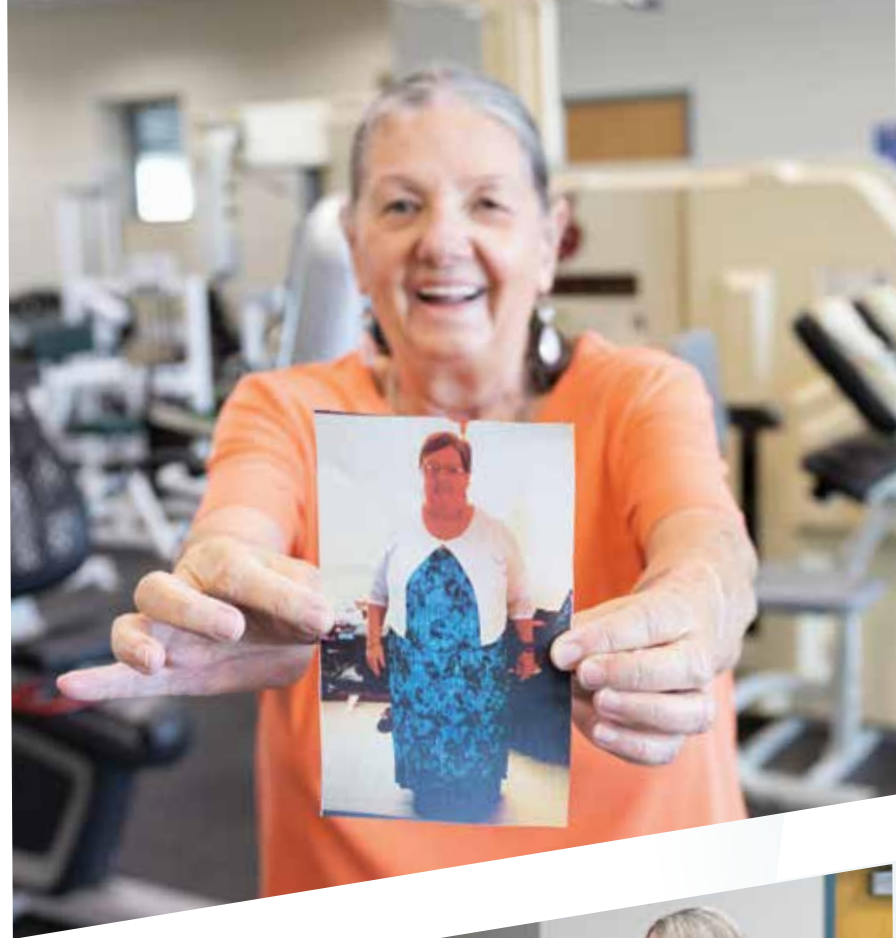
EARTHQUAKE RELIEF Donors Exceed Expectations

When the sisters of *Felician Mission: Haiti* put out the call for help after an earthquake and tropical storm walloped the country, the response was quick and generous. Donations of money, medical supplies, shoes, clothing, furniture and other items poured into the convents. Sisters, volunteers and staff quickly packed everything up and sent it to New Jersey, where it was placed into large shipping containers and sent on its way to Haiti. Donations will be a welcomed relief to restock the shelves to replace supplies sent to nearby Les Cayes in August, the epicenter of the earthquake. Please continue to pray for Haiti during this challenging time.

If you would like to make a donation online, visit FelicianSistersNA.org/Haiti.

Mèsi! In August, all of the donations were gathered, sorted, wrapped and packed. Staff and students from Felician University and Immaculate Conception High School in Lodi, NJ, helped sisters load the container.





Empowering a Community With Good Health

Photography by Ed Rieker

The names of the clients in this article have been changed to protect their privacy.

At the Felician Wellness Center in Centralia, IL, exercise and wellness coordinator Jacy Keef sees many clients who struggle with obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Unfortunately, in a city like Centralia, where nearly **20% of the population lives in poverty, limited access to affordable healthy food and fitness programs is common.** These factors lead to obesity which puts people at higher risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke and certain types of cancer. According to the CDC, 31.6% of adults in Illinois self-identified as obese, and the leading cause of death in the state is heart disease.

In response to this threat to the health of the community, Sr. Mary Clarette Strzewska, president of Hopebound Ministries, a branch of Felician Services, Inc. (FSI), collaborated with SSM Health's Good Samaritan Hospital in Mt. Vernon, IL, and St. Mary's Hospital in Centralia, IL, to create the Felician Wellness Center. The

partnership sought to help people reverse chronic illness, end reliance on medications and improve their overall quality of life.

Two of the Felician Wellness Center's clients, Amy and Mary, were struggling. At 235 pounds, Amy had congestive heart failure, was on oxygen full-time and used a walker. Mary suffered from autoimmune disease and experienced debilitating neck, back and shoulder pain. For Amy, Mary and so many others like them, the road back to health seemed far too long; they felt like giving up before they had even begun. Thanks to the NEXT (Nutrition, Exercise and Training) program, they don't need to travel the road alone.

NEXT, a first-of-its-kind program in southern Illinois, was introduced by Felician Wellness in 2010. Led by Keef and her team, the program joins people on their journey back to health, one step at a time, offering education, exercise and individualized training and support.

Each NEXT session meets twice weekly for six weeks and incorporates guest speakers such as physicians, dietitians and mental health professionals, to speak on topics like blood sugar control, healthy eating, anti-inflammatory diets, portion control and ideas for keeping active at home.

Participants are also given a free body-composition scan, which measures weight, BMI, muscle mass, hydration, metabolism and fat. These scans are used to track a person's progress in more tangible ways than just weight. "Some people might get discouraged if the number on the scale doesn't go down," said Keef, "but then they see that they've turned fat into muscle mass and they recognize their progress."

With the help of the NEXT program, Amy lost 55 pounds; she is walking on her own and no longer requires oxygen. Mary lost 12 pounds in six weeks and has greatly improved mobility and energy. "Seeing people lose weight, get off medications, and reverse heart disease and diabetes is the best part of my job," said Keef. "The program gives them hope for the future."

Anyone over the age of 13 can participate, regardless of physical fitness, disabilities or other health challenges. Though there is a \$30 fee for each six-week session, the Felician Sisters of North America offer 50% and 100% scholarships. "The sisters didn't want cost to be a deterrent," said Keef. "God bless them."

Seeing the success of NEXT, Dr. Todd Beadle, vice president of special projects and senior ministry advisor for FSI, who also has a background in

education, wanted to do more to serve school-aged children. "The problems of childhood obesity and diabetes are growing, but when schools have to make budget cuts, the physical education and arts programs are the first to go," said Dr. Beadle.

With this in mind, he met with physical education instructors and superintendents in southern Illinois to collaborate on what would become LEAN (Learning, Exercise and Nutrition), a program that provides school districts with funds to cover salaries for physical education teachers, equipment, professional development, individual and group sports programs and testing to track progress.

LEAN is now in place in five school districts in southern Illinois and two Felician-sponsored ministries: St. Joseph Academy in Milwaukee, WI, and Mooncrest Neighborhood Programs in Moon Township, PA. "Last year, we served **972 students,**" reported Dr. Beadle. "90% of them met or exceeded their fitness goals (flexibility, physical strength, muscular endurance and cardiovascular endurance). These are wonderful programs with great results for the money being spent."

The impact of these programs on the community is undeniable, and as Felician Wellness continues to expand their programs and their reach, they expect to see more positive results as they seek to empower people to take control of their personal wellness. 🌸

For more information on the Felician Wellness Center and their programs, visit [FelicianSistersNA.org/Wellness](https://www.feliciansistersna.org/wellness).



FELICIAN MINISTRIES IN NORTH AMERICA

Since the Felician Sisters arrived in North America in 1874, they have continued to evolve to meet the needs of the time, by following God's will and Blessed Mary Angela's directive to "serve where you are needed." Our sisters continue to shape the social service landscape in North America through their work in our ministries and in pastoral service in schools, parishes, prisons, hospitals, dioceses and other organizations. The ministries below are sponsored or co-sponsored or were founded by the Felician Sisters of North America.

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 & Universities

Felician University
Lodi, NJ
Madonna University
Livonia, MI
Villa Maria College
Buffalo, NY

AT-RISK YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mooncrest
Neighborhood Programs
Moon Township, PA
United Stand
Chicago, IL
Villa Maria Youth Program
Buffalo, NY

ENRICHMENT & OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

Jericho House
Port Colborne, ON, Canada
Maryville Retreat Center
Holly, MI
Seeds of Hope
Youth Leadership Conference
Holly, MI

MINISTRY TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

McGuire Memorial
New Brighton, PA

SENIOR LIVING & HEALTH CARE

Angela Hospice Home Care
Livonia, MI
Felician Adult Day Center
Enfield, CT
Felician Village
Manitowoc, WI
SSM 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
SSM St. Mary's Hospital
Centralia, IL
Villa St. Francis
Milwaukee, WI

MISSION MINISTRY

Felician Mission: Haiti
Jacmel, Haiti
Felician Mission: Tulita
Tulita, NT, Canada

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Angela Court Senior Residence
Philadelphia, PA
Francis House
Philadelphia, PA
Our Lady of Grace Village
Newark, DE

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
Sr. Mary Josette Food Pantry
Buffalo, NY
St. Anne's Family Services
Los Angeles, CA
St. Felix Centre
Toronto, ON, Canada
St. Felix Pantry
Rio Rancho, NM

To learn more, volunteer or support our ministries, visit FelicianSistersNA.org/Ministries.



June 13-18, 2022
Maryville Retreat Center
Holly, Michigan

Scholarships are available.
Sponsorships are needed.

Be a Leader

Seeds of Hope Youth Leadership Conference brings together high school students, peer leaders and adult mentors to give young women an opportunity to explore and enhance their talents, goals and capacity for leadership.

For information, visit
FelicianSistersNA.org/SeedsOfHope.



Blessed Mary Angela Truskowska recognized the social injustices of the time. Her compassion for the orphans, widows and homeless on the streets of Warsaw led her on a mission to serve — but she could not do it alone.

Donations from loyal benefactors supported her efforts — allowing her to serve in total availability.

Today, we continue to follow Blessed Angela's call to "serve where you are needed," and like her, we rely on our benefactors — our "angels."

We are pleased to announce the launch of our monthly giving club.

ANGELA'S ANGELS

Will You Join?

Participants in the monthly giving club provide a consistent source of funding, creating a safety net for those in need and allowing us to act swiftly in the face of a crisis. Automatic processing also helps us reduce our costs, freeing more resources for use in ministry.

Your monthly gift, at any level, will help us continue to serve the most vulnerable.

Become a Charter Member by joining Angela's Angels with a gift of \$10/month by December 31, 2021, and receive a Blessed Mary Angela rosary.

All members will also receive:

- Special communications throughout the year
- A personalized year-end giving statement
- The ability to update your giving level at any time
- Inclusion in an annual Mass intention
- The gratitude and prayers of the Felician Sisters for supporting our work and allowing us to respond quickly, when help is needed most

It's Easy
to Sign Up



ONLINE
Visit FelicianSistersNA.org/Angels to fill out your gift and payment information.

Call (724) 462-3130 to start your gift by credit or debit.

Your donation will be automatically billed to your credit card or deducted from your bank account each month. You can update or change your gift at any time!



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What to Watch in 2022



Sr. Judith Marie Blizzard will be a featured presenter at SEEK22, a national conference for Catholic young adults to be held February 4-6, 2022. This hybrid event will have both virtual and in-person options for attendees. Learn more at seek.focus.org.

seek²²



MARCH 8 - 14, 2022
CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK

Celebrate with us! Look for events at our website and in our monthly e-newsletter. To receive our newsletters, email us at feliciansisters@feliciansisters.org.



Share your email with us and
We'll Send You a 2022 Felician Sisters Calendar
that includes Franciscan feast days and significant congregational celebrations.

Send your email with "2022 Calendar" in the subject to feliciansisters@feliciansisters.org.



Angela's House is expected to be completed by June 2022. At the August 26 groundbreaking of the former Villa Maria Academy repurposed as a supportive living community, Felician Provincial Minister Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki proclaimed, "The ground on which we stand is holy ground — ground that has been hallowed by 84 years of educating young women to realize their full potential. This day marks the beginning of a new path of ministering to seniors by offering affordable housing."



If you are 70 1/2 years old with an IRA

Honor the sisters who brightened your future. You can direct a gift to the Felician Sisters and satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD) from your IRA, 401(k), 403(b) or your life insurance plan. Talk to your financial advisor about this strategic giving opportunity.



Learn more at FelicianSistersNA.org/Giving or contact our Office of Mission Advancement at 724-944-9814 or giving@feliciansisters.org.