

Felician Mission: Haiti is sponsored by the Felician Sisters of North America through Our Lady of Hope Province to live our commitment to justice and peace and to raise the dignity of the human person, especially women and children, in the whole world.

FELICIAN SISTERS OF NORTH AMERICA

Mission: Haiti

2021 REPORT



Dear Friend in Christ,

When I think about the constant flow of adversity that has come upon our brothers and sisters in Haiti, I am reminded of St. Paul's words to the people of Corinth: "With the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it."

Our sisters in Haiti have been witness to God's gracious hand many times over this past year. His hand has appeared through the provision of medical supplies, education sponsorship for nearly 100 children and vocational training for women so they can support their families. When a hurricane damaged the mission complex and destroyed computers in our learning lab, God inspired volunteers to make repairs and you to provide funds for new computers so our children would not fall behind.

Our goal in Haiti is not solely to meet the daily needs of the people. Our sisters collaborate with the community and the many people God sends to them to develop creative opportunities for education and employment, to ensure physical and spiritual health and offer them a future where they are able to support their families with dignity.

Inspired by St. Paul, we rejoice in hope, endure in affliction and persevere in prayer.

Thank you for accompanying us on this journey, and God bless you.

Yours in Mary, Our Lady of Hope,

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

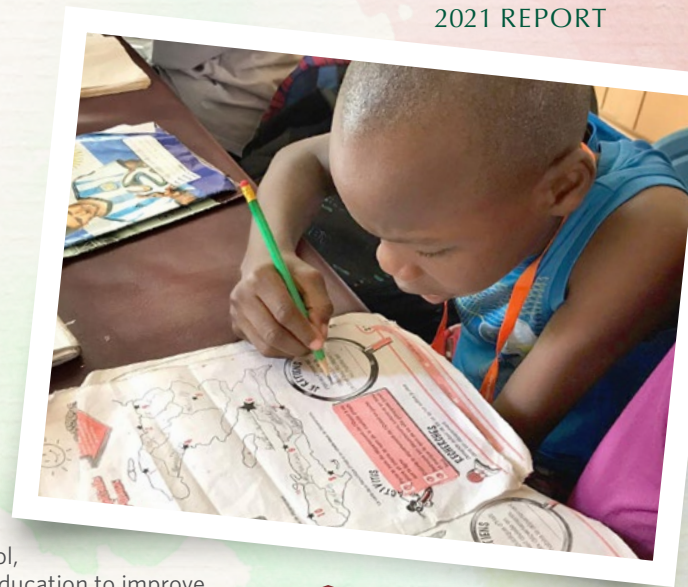
Give the Gift of Hope

In Haiti, the public school system is not free. Families must pay a fee and purchase a uniform, shoes, supplies and books. **When 59% of families live on less than \$2 per day, survival, not education, is their priority.** That's why our *Pay it Forward Program* is so critical and one of the biggest needs of the people we serve.

This program covers students at all levels — from little ones beginning their learning, to adolescents continuing their academic growth in secondary school, to high school graduates seeking higher education to improve their future and provide for their families. The *Pay it Forward Program* offers opportunity and hope to struggling families still recovering from the 2010 earthquake and now facing the impact of the pandemic, recent earthquake, hurricane and political climate of Haiti.

The program is special in that sponsored students not only benefit from the generosity of donors who contribute toward the cost of their education, they also gain a sense of responsibility, work ethic and discipline as each student is given a specific job at the mission complex. Some tutor younger students or manage our computer lab, and others assist with our faith formation program, helping younger children prepare for sacraments. Just as in all of our mission programs, our goal is to instill ability and confidence in our people, so they are empowered to improve their lives.

The open hearts and hands of our supporters put 70 students through elementary and secondary school this past year, directly effecting positive change in the lives of our children. Donors can gift a full scholarship to a student or help purchase the necessities of attending school that our families are not able to afford. Every dollar of every gift goes straight to the students and will be the difference between a life of hardship and a self-sustaining future! +



You can invest in students — and Haiti's future — with the *Pay it Forward Program*.

Full Scholarship

\$360 or \$30/month for Elementary
\$540 or \$45/month for Secondary
\$1,020 or \$85/month for University or Advanced Degree

Additional Education Support

\$20 can buy a pair of school shoes.
\$60 can provide a backpack and school books.
\$100 can give a child a uniform, underwear and socks.



Welcome Sr. Julitta! Five years ago, Sr. Mary Julitta Kurek visited us from Poland and knew God wanted her to come back someday. She was assigned to our mission last year, but the pandemic delayed her arrival, and then she contracted COVID. After many obstacles, our joy in receiving our newest sister is even greater! The whole community has embraced Sr. Julitta. We thank God with great joy for sending her to us!

■ **Learning the language:** Sr. Julitta works on her Creole with our friend, Madam Omanie.



Changing the Fabric of Lives



■ A Pattern for Economic Hope

Students in the sewing school take their final exam and hope to put these learned skills toward a job.

Some people consider sewing a hobby, but in Haiti, this practical skill means self-sufficiency and the opportunity to earn income. We are happy to report that this new endeavor is a success, and a second group of students started in January!

Our sewing school is made up of three levels that progress from simple to harder skills, with the goal of students having basic sewing skills they can use to earn a living or make clothing for their family. In the beginning, they learn how to cut out patterns and measure materials, but by the end, they are able to complete a whole garment on their own! There were five students in the first group that started last year, and there are six in the new group. Classes are held twice a week, and students use our eight sewing machines powered by solar panels.

Not every student is able to complete the program — sewing isn't as easy as Sr. Izzy makes it look! We were very excited in May when three students passed the final exam and graduated from the program. Junior and Rosemary were two of our first students and they help with sewing projects at the mission frequently, including sewing masks for the Mother Angela Mobile Clinic and Baptism and First Communion outfits for our faith formation students. Junior also sews school uniforms.

The sewing school, like our future bakery, illustrates the roles that are necessary to accomplish our mission: **we identify the needs of the people, God inspires us with a solution that promotes self-reliance and you generously provide the means to make it happen!** +

Coming soon — an online marketplace featuring a range of items made by our sewing students and other members of our community — from aprons and potholders to bags, coasters, jewelry and artwork. Every item is handmade, and 100% of the proceeds will help support our mission.



FAITH FORMATION

Called to be a Child of God

Many of the things we share with you about everyday life in Haiti may seem hopeless — hunger, lack of clean water, limited access to medical care. Yes, there are challenges each new dawn brings to the people we serve. That is why **our focus on faith formation is as essential to survival as food, water and shelter.**

Cousins Davi and Kasi have had difficult lives. Davi's mother died soon after his birth, and Kasi's mother disappeared when she was an infant, leaving them to be raised by their grandmother. Because they don't have the blessing of loving parents to provide structure and stability, they don't attend school regularly and spend a lot of time in the streets.

Last fall, Davi and Kasi joined our faith formation classes that Sr. Inga teaches. They joined many other "street children" who developed dignity and respect for themselves as they learned that God the father called them to be part of his family.



Understanding the vastness of his everlasting love gives these children the ability to deal with the hardships of life in Haiti.

On the day Kasi and Davi were baptized and received their

First Holy Communion, we could see an awakening of new life in them. The look in Davi's eyes showed it was the first time he felt like he belonged. Kasi, in her beautiful communion dress made by Sr. Izajasza, discovered the gift for song that God blessed her with and she used it to praise him.

After the children made their First Confession, they received a candle to remind them they are the light of Christ to the world. It is not always easy for children like Davi and Kasi to believe this when there is so much suffering in their lives, but we continue to reassure them that God indeed knows them and loves them.

Our mission to advance the spiritual renewal of the world is strengthened with each new child of God. +





Our Daily Bread

Each day we encounter Christ in some form; often it is as simple as a knock at our gate. Every month, we get a visit from a very poor woman and her three children. Sometimes they come hungry, always in tattered clothes and usually sick. We know this is Christ asking us to be sister and servant.

Hunger remains a critical problem here, and it is worsening due to the pandemic and the political instability that continues to rage through the country. Everything here has doubled in price! Many of our mothers are not able to feed their children. **Five out of eight children suffered from malnutrition last year, and we are seeing more families coming to us more often seeking food** and sharing their fears and anxiety with us. We see real depression growing among our people.

We notice when we gather for prayers, more and more people come looking for hope, comfort and God's help. Some days we are not certain how we will feed the growing numbers in need. We walk by faith, not by sight, and believe that like the manna in the desert, the Lord will see to our daily needs. +

Bread of Life



Praise the Lord! Progress on our bakery continues despite delays due to demonstrations, road blocks and weather. Psalm 90 pleads, "Give us joy to balance our affliction." As time passes, we see God answer our prayers!

The dream was born when we discovered a homeless woman living in the woods across from our mission. Our hearts broke for her, and we considered how we could help her find a way to support herself. God opened our eyes to his abundant gift of bananas and mangoes, reminding us, "I am the bread of life." We knew in that moment how we would help this woman, and many like her in Jacmel; we would build a bakery — or boulangerie in Creole — to provide vocational training and create jobs!

Through the generous support of many benefactors and the guidance of our dear friend Dr. Jean-Paul Bonnet and Jean Hubert Romain, one of the first graduates of Felician-sponsored Madonna University's online program in Haiti, planning and progress continue. We began by securing the land

through the Diocese of Jacmel.

Next, we worked with *Water For Life*, a nonprofit devoted to providing clean drinking water and farm irrigation to the Haitian people.

In May, digging began for the wells, but heavy rains started and made it too muddy to continue. *Water For Life*

moved on to other sites and their equipment failed. Everything stopped. It would take weeks to receive new machine parts! This did not discourage us; we know nothing is impossible with God. In June, digging proceeded but now we must wait due to road closures and issues that have arisen from the political crisis, storms and earthquake.

We continue moving forward with God's plan! Watch our dream in progress at FelicianSistersHaiti.com, and if you register, we will send an email each time we have an update. +

20 to 40 jobs will be created for Haitians with the opening of the Boulangerie.



Blessed by Your Support

Blessed Mary Angela told her daughters to serve where they are needed, and that's exactly what the Mother Angela Clinic does, traveling to places where no healthcare facilities are available for miles. The pandemic and political unrest over the past year shut down hospitals, and our mobile clinic was virtually the only resource available in our area. **We provided urgently needed medical care to more than 7,000 people during this difficult time!**

In the first months of the pandemic, the Mercedarian Sisters were forced to close their medical clinic in Wout Lavale, about half an hour from Jacmel. In their absence, the Mother Angela Clinic stepped in, taking care of the sick people the sisters normally serve.

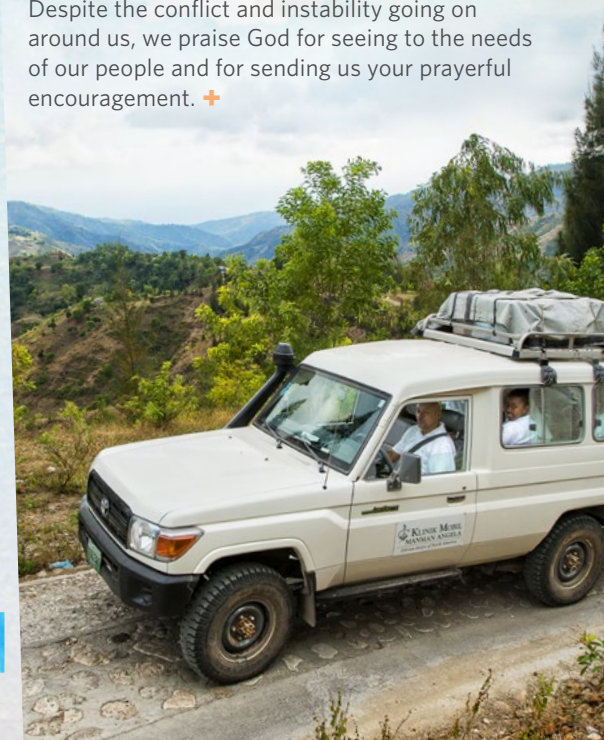
In the mountain area of Lavale, many children have skin infections caused by sleeping on dirt floors, and recently there has been an outbreak of Norwegian scabies, a very painful and contagious all-over body rash, often leading to secondary infections. We see many people over the age of 40 with extremely high blood pressure and diabetes who are able to be monitored monthly and receive medication through our clinic.

With the clinic team and Sr. Marilyn's help, 75 patients can be seen within a few hours making long journeys to remote areas well worth the time.

The first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine — only 500,000 for more than 11 million people — reached Haiti in July 2021. The political situation, lack of reliable electricity to keep the vaccines cool and other challenges will make it difficult for all Haitians to be vaccinated, but we trust the Lord will guide our efforts to see our people are protected.

We would not have been able to ensure the health of so many people without the medicine and supplies your support made possible. Despite the conflict and instability going on around us, we praise God for seeing to the needs of our people and for sending us your prayerful encouragement. +

In Haiti, for every **3,000** citizens, there is **1** trained doctor or nurse.





The Felician Sisters is an international community of more than 1,000 vowed women religious across four continents. Founded in Poland in 1855, we arrived in North America in 1874 with the blessing of our Foundress Blessed Mary Angela to minister to Polish immigrants. In 2009, the Felician Sisters of North America formed Our Lady of Hope Province by uniting eight Felician provinces from across the U.S. and Canada to sustain and expand our mission. Today, we continue to minister in a variety of ways as we seek to fulfill our mission to “cooperate with Christ in the spiritual renewal of the world.” Learn more about our work throughout North America at FelicianSistersNA.org.

Dear Friend in Christ,

Praise the Lord! We are so grateful for your ongoing prayers and support of our Felician Mission: Haiti and thank our God for **you** as we continue our journey in Jacmel, Haiti.

With your support, parts of our ministry that were once only dreams are becoming reality. We invite you to follow the stories of our mission on our blog: FelicianSistersHaiti.com.

We are not deterred by the challenges before us. Political unrest and COVID-19 have not dampened our resolve to do God’s work here. We will continue to evolve in our **ministry of presence** as we meet the ongoing challenges of the poorest country in the western hemisphere.

Please keep us in your prayers as we keep you in ours as we follow in the footprints of Saints Francis, Clare and Felix and Blessed Mary Angela in Haiti.

Your sisters because of Jesus and Mary, Sisters Marilyn Marie Minter, Mary Izajaszka Rojek, Mary Inga Borko and Mary Julitta Kurek



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On August 14, a devastating earthquake destroyed homes and roads, wounding thousands and killing more than 2,200. We gathered clothing, shoes, sheets, towels, medications, bandages and surgical gloves to send to Les Cayes. We pray God will be merciful in this area where more than 30,000 people have been left homeless.

Photo: Valerie Baeriswyl