

### Our Provincial Minister



Dear Friend in Christ,

As I reflect on the first six months of our new provincial administration, I am grateful for the many blessings we have received both individually and as a community. The Lord has accomplished much good through our ministries across the North American continent and in Central America.

As daughters of Mother Angela, we have served those in need for generations. In these modern times, compassion is complemented by innovative, mission-driven solutions that lift up those we serve and enable them to lead independent and productive lives. For example, the House of Bread bakery and Haitian Education Leadership Program (H.E.L.P.) graduates are creating an infrastructure of skilled, inspired Haitian leaders to improve their communities. Sisters in Toronto are pairing shelter and training to support homeless women on their journey to independence. Our goal is to address the needs of the vulnerable and marginalized in ways that offer sustenance and hope for the future.

The challenges of our own day have inspired us to stand up to the destruction of precious ecosystems, to lead by example in engaging solar energy, and to find new uses for old buildings. These are just some of the ways that we can advocate for and reverence the amazing gift of nature God has given us.

Recognizing the work that still needs to be done, we are preparing the next generation — from teen groups to novitiates — to carry our mission into the future. The consolidation of our Felician archives will serve as a significant resource in the decades to come. The support of our friends is another important part of the picture.

New beginnings are sometimes challenging, but always exciting. I am honored to lead Our Lady of Hope Province as we begin a new year and build upon the successes of 2021. Thank you for all that you do to support our mission!

Peace and all good things!

Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki, CSSF  
Provincial Minister

## Felicians Protect Okefenokee

Sisters use shareholder status to reject mining of critical wetland before it begins

Felician Sisters are always nurturing caregivers, but sometimes they have to play offense. Their recent strategic move in Georgia demonstrates the Felician commitment to environmental justice.

Most of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southern Georgia was designated for conservation by President Roosevelt in 1937, and Okefenokee Swamp, formed more than 6,000 years ago, is a marvel of biodiversity. Home to more than 600 plant species and 400 animal species, the refuge is now threatened by a potential mining project.

"It's an ecosystem that could be harmed permanently," said Sr. Mary Jean Sliwinski, Provincial Sustainability Coordinator for the Felician Sisters of North America.

Twin Pines Minerals, LLC is planning a 12,000-acre titanium mining project along the edge of the refuge. Mine drilling will deplete more than one million gallons of water per day from the Floridan aquifer and lower water levels in Okefenokee Swamp, potentially leading to habitat destruction and increased risk of catastrophic wildfires. This is a cause for concern since there is already endangered wildlife whose survival depends on North America's largest blackwater wetland.

**"When you think of the swamp, the trees, and the creatures, of all that exists within that ecosystem, they are voiceless," said Sr. Jean. "So, while we often stand for people who are voiceless, sometimes our Earth is voiceless as well."**



The riparian bald cypress helps mitigate flood zones, traps water pollutants, and can live more than 1,000 years.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is one of only four areas that offers the opportunity to conserve the vulnerable gopher tortoise. The longleaf pines of the wetland provide the sandy soil conditions needed for successful egg incubation. Also, as a keystone species, the gopher tortoise's burrows are used by hundreds of other animals for shelter, so losing gopher tortoises will have a cascading effect on the ecosystem.

The bald cypress, a tree species important for flood control, species habitat, and pollution prevention, also finds sanctuary in Okefenokee. Threatened due to logging for the mulch and overseas energy industries, the bald cypress tree was cited

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## New Provincial Leadership Elected

Six sisters chosen to lead Our Lady of Hope into 2026

Twelve years ago, the Felician Sisters of North America made the bold choice to unite their eight provinces into Our Lady of Hope Province, allowing for a more strategic use of resources and service to others. The new province was placed under the leadership of one provincial minister and a provincial council operating as an executive leadership team to oversee approximately 400 Felician Sisters and their ministries across the United States, Canada and Haiti.

In June, the third provincial administration was elected and Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki was announced as the second provincial minister, following Sr. Mary Christopher

Moore, who served as provincial minister the first two terms. Sr. Janet Marie Adamczyk, Sr. Suzanne Marie Kush and Sr. Mary Rosita Brennan returned to the provincial council for their second term, and Sr. Mary Sharon Iacobucci and Sr. Nancy Marie Pieciewicz began their first terms following outgoing provincial councilors: Sr. Constance Marie Tomyl, Sr. Mary GERALYN Mroczkowski, Sr. Mary Jolene Jasinski and Sr. Michelle Marie Stachowiak.

This was an extraordinary time to change leadership, with COVID-19 continuing to bring many challenges. Both leadership teams responded to

the needs of the time by asking what more they could do to help those who were suffering and chose to globally reimagine our world and their role in it. Their compassionate and innovative ways of accompanying those in need with respect for the dignity of all persons is reflective of the servant leadership as led by their foundress, Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska.

We look forward to 2022 with the leadership of this group of women in a time where there is so much need, knowing they will continue to listen and respond to the cries of the poor. May God bless and guide them in their roles.

### IN 2021, THE FELICIAN SISTERS LEADERSHIP TEAM SERVED THOSE IN NEED BY:

**Leading demonstrations** against social and racial injustice.

**Accepting sponsorship of new ministries** to keep them viable and support their work.

**Appointing Felician Sisters in leadership positions** to provide compassionate leadership to support the voiceless.

**Adapting ministries and convents** to accommodate the growing numbers of families facing food insecurity.

**Continuing to build a bakery in Haiti**, to create an infrastructure of employment and life sustaining bread for the people.

**Repurposing space** for immigrants, elderly and the homeless to support the growing number of people in need. ✨

Sr. Rita Marie Vondra was one of a dozen sisters featured in social media during National Vocation Week to promote the work sisters do in ministries. **Read more about our sisters on our Facebook page!**

**Find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.**

We share special events with audiences around the world.






I AM A CHEF  
Sr. Rita Marie Vondra

351 35 Shares

# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

## Our Lady of Hope Province

We are pleased to sponsor, co-sponsor or support through the presence of our sisters more than 40 ministries throughout North America. To learn more, visit [FelicianSistersNA.org/Ministries](http://FelicianSistersNA.org/Ministries).

-  = Felician Ministry
-  = Felician Convents
-  = Felician Ministry Highlighted in 2021

Tulita, NT, Canada  
90 miles south of the Arctic Circle.



**Sister Takes to Radio to Pray with Slavey People**

Sr. Celeste Goulet, an Elder of the Slavey people in Tulita where she has ministered for 40 years, began praying with her people over the radio during the pandemic.

 Tulita is a hamlet with a population of 500.



**Felician Archives Relocated**

Shelving units await archives from throughout the province that were moved to their new home, the **FSNA Heritage Center & Archives**. Located inside the Madonna University Welcome Center, they will serve as a resource for decades to come.



Homeless women are **10x** more likely to die prematurely.

**Technology to Help Break Cycle of Poverty**

**St. Felix House** in Toronto — supportive housing for homeless women — received a gift of computers to provide women with access to classes, to create resumes, and search for jobs.



The senior population of Buffalo, NY has grown **26%** over 10 years amidst rising rents.

**Angela House Groundbreaking**

Newly elected Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki attended the first official event as provincial minister at former **Villa Maria High School**, repurposed as affordable housing for seniors.



**64K** people are experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles with **72%** unsheltered.

**Summit on Homelessness**

**St. Anne's Family Services** hosted a virtual panel, "The Changing Face of Homelessness in Los Angeles," to dispel stereotypes, provide humanity to those affected, encourage discussion and find solutions for an issue that needs our collective support.

 Find the link to watch the summit at [FelicianSistersNA.org/Year](http://FelicianSistersNA.org/Year)

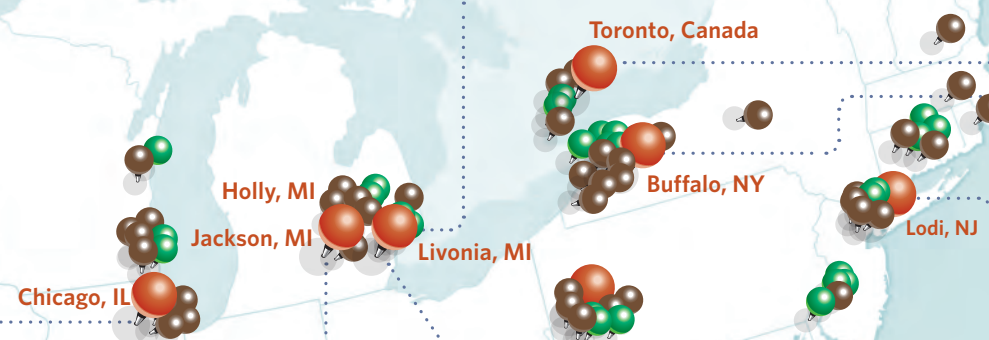


The number of women entering convents has remained consistent for the last **15 Years**.

**Meet Our Sisters Virtual Tour**

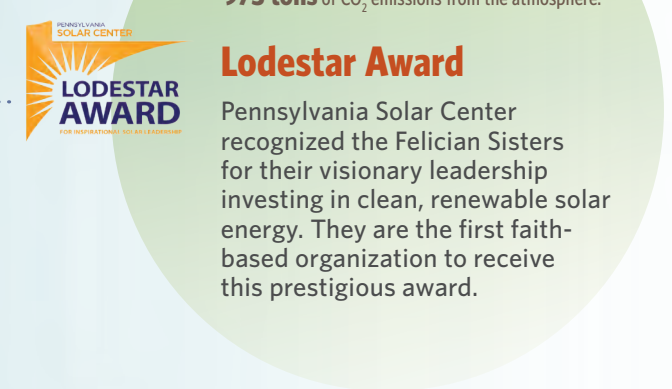
As part of *National Vocation Week*, Felician Sisters joined Chicago congregations to invite women to tour their convents: **Mother of Good Counsel, St. Turibius, St. Vincent De Paul** and **St. Felix**, their **Hyde Park Formation House** for novitiates.

 Find the link to watch the virtual tour at [FelicianSistersNA.org/Year](http://FelicianSistersNA.org/Year)




**Golden Anniversary**

The **Felician School for Exceptional Children** celebrated 50 years of providing education and life skills for children with special needs at every age.



As of May, **85%** of the Beaver Falls building's energy needs have been supplied by solar, keeping **973 tons** of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the atmosphere.

**LODESTAR AWARD**

**Lodestar Award**

Pennsylvania Solar Center recognized the Felician Sisters for their visionary leadership investing in clean, renewable solar energy. They are the first faith-based organization to receive this prestigious award.



The median income in Jackson, MI is **\$35K**  
The average cost of child care **\$9K**

**Spotlighting Child Care as Essential in a Healthy Economy**

**Felician Children's Center** was featured in the November *Jackson Magazine* for providing affordable quality child care even during the pandemic, which shed light on the vital role child care plays in supporting a workforce.

Find the link to the article at [FelicianSistersNA.org/Year](http://FelicianSistersNA.org/Year)




Águilas' searches in 2021 resulted in: **183** lives saved  
**21** remains recovered

**Sister Joins Leadership of Border Search & Rescue Organization**

Felician Sisters increased efforts to save lives at the southwest border by approving the appointment of Sr. Maria Louise Edwards as vice president of planning for Águilas del Desierto.

Learn more at [aguilasdeldesierto.org](http://aguilasdeldesierto.org)



in 2021, Texas had the highest population growth in the U.S. with **310,288+** new residents, many identifying as Catholics seeking religious education.

**Sisters Leave a Legacy in Laredo**

Upon moving on from **St. Augustine High School** for new ministries, Sr. Rosemarie Goins and Sr. Christina Marie Conroy reflected on making a powerful impact on families by initiating Teen ACTS, a Catholic retreat for high school students that has not only engaged hundreds of students but reinvigorated parents in their faith as well.


**ACTS**




**More than 1/3** of Kingstree, SC, residents live in poverty.


**Making Homes Safe**

Sisters at **Felician Center** in Kingstree, SC, were awarded a \$50,000 Sacred Heart Charitable grant to help neighbors make home improvements. A second grant of \$30,000 was given to celebrate the sisters' 30-year anniversary, broadening the project.



**H.E.L.P. Grads Attend Commencement in U.S.**

 Hear their stories in the video, *An Education to Build a Nation* on [FelicianSistersNA.org/Year](http://FelicianSistersNA.org/Year).



**Earthquake, Hurricane and Violence Plague Haiti**

Sisters were grateful for the outpouring of support from donors and media as they faced the most challenging year at **Felician Mission: Haiti**.



Our ministries are asked to uphold the **FIVE CORE VALUES** that are hallmarks of our Felician culture and identity:

- Respect for Human Dignity:** exhibited by a reverence for and commitment to promoting and protecting the dignity of all persons;
- Compassion:** characterized by an empathetic consciousness toward others expressed in caring service;
- Transformation:** characterized by an open heart and mind, leading to continuous improvement of all involved in our ministry;
- Solidarity with People with Needs:** ensuring that people's needs are met through advocacy and action;
- Justice and Peace:** forging right relationships, recreating a sustainable environment, promoting the common good — all in the pursuit of peace.



Photo: Elliott Cramer

## Speaking Out Against Rising Hate

Felician Sister **Dong Hong Marie Zhang** told Global Sisters Report in July, "I feel upset and angry at the violence against Chinese people in New York and other places around the country."

Sr. Dong Hong is the liaison to the Chinese community for the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ. She said people she ministers to have been spat on and felt threatened.

Asian-Americans are the most rapidly growing ethnic group in the U.S. and make up the largest percentage of new Catholic sisters arriving from other continents, yet **in 2021 hate crimes against this group increased by 70 percent and more than doubled in New York City alone.**

The recent increase in hate crimes may be related to the COVID-19 pandemic, unjustly blamed on Asian Americans by hate groups. With the virus taking so many lives and disrupting our world, people have sought someone to blame. As a Chinese immigrant, Sr. Dong Hong understands how the Asian population feels in the face of such vicious indictments.

"I am not afraid for my life, but the Chinese people to whom I minister told me that they are afraid, especially in public areas."

In her role as liaison to the Chinese community, she invites people to speak about their experiences. During online prayer meetings, private conversations, or small group gatherings participants often share their own hate crime experiences and discuss proactive defenses when on public transportation or walking on the street to stave off potential attacks.

Stressing the need for dialogue and inclusion, Sr. Dong Hong said, "In our religious community, parish church and diocese, we need to be sensitive toward members of other cultures. Although we are a minority, it does not mean we don't have a voice." \*

Find the link to this article by *Global Sisters Report* at [FelicianSisterNA.org/Year](https://www.feliciansisterna.org/Year).

## Felicians Protect Okefenokee

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in the Endangered Species Coalition's 2016 Top 10 Species Priorities, noting that up to 80 percent of forested wetlands in the southern United States have already disappeared.

While Twin Pines, the company proposing the mining project, is not publicly traded, Chemours, a multibillion-dollar chemical company with other mining operations in Georgia that has shown interest in acquiring the project or at the very least purchasing the titanium it produces, must answer to its shareholders. Just as the Felician Sisters participate in the *Investor Alliance for Human Rights* to raise awareness of human trafficking in global products, they're using their status as Chemours shareholders to speak for the planet.



**" Advocacy, with corporations and political leaders, is an important means for us to use our collective voice to affect positive change locally and in the world around us. As people of faith, we possess a moral voice so needed at this time to protect people and the Earth. "**  
*Sr. Jean Sliwinski*

More than 20 years ago, Chemours' predecessor, DuPont, abandoned a much larger mining proposal in the same area along the edge of the Okefenokee refuge after strong opposition from environmental groups, local governments, Indian tribes, and, most effectively, DuPont stockholders. DuPont ultimately donated the land for conservation and agreed never to mine there.

On behalf of the Felician Sisters *Green Century Capital Management*,

an environmentally responsible investment firm, filed a shareholders resolution to Chemours in November, asking that they never operate or profit from the proposed Twin Pines mine. As a result of the resolution filing, positive dialogue is in progress with the company. The sisters are hopeful this dialogue leads to a favorable outcome for Okefenokee's future. \*

Find the link to this article by *The Current* at [FelicianSisterNA.org/Year](https://www.feliciansisterna.org/Year).

## Forging Ahead in Haiti

Unprecedented challenges in 2021 don't impede progress on boulangerie

An assassination, a disastrous earthquake, kidnappings and civil unrest may sound like the setting of an action movie, but this is everyday life for the people of Haiti. Despite the turmoil around them, the Felician Sisters in Jacmel and a devoted network of champions forge ahead, building a bakery to shine light in the darkness.

"We wanted to be baking by Christmas of last year," said Dr. Jean-Paul Bonnet, a dear friend and supporter of the Felician Sisters. In 2021 the project was impacted by the assassination of Haiti's president, the major earthquake, and continuing social discord that has raged through the country for more than three years. In the face of these fierce obstacles, the sisters and their supporters remain steadfast. **"Many things stood in our way but hope and progress remain strong for the bakery project."**

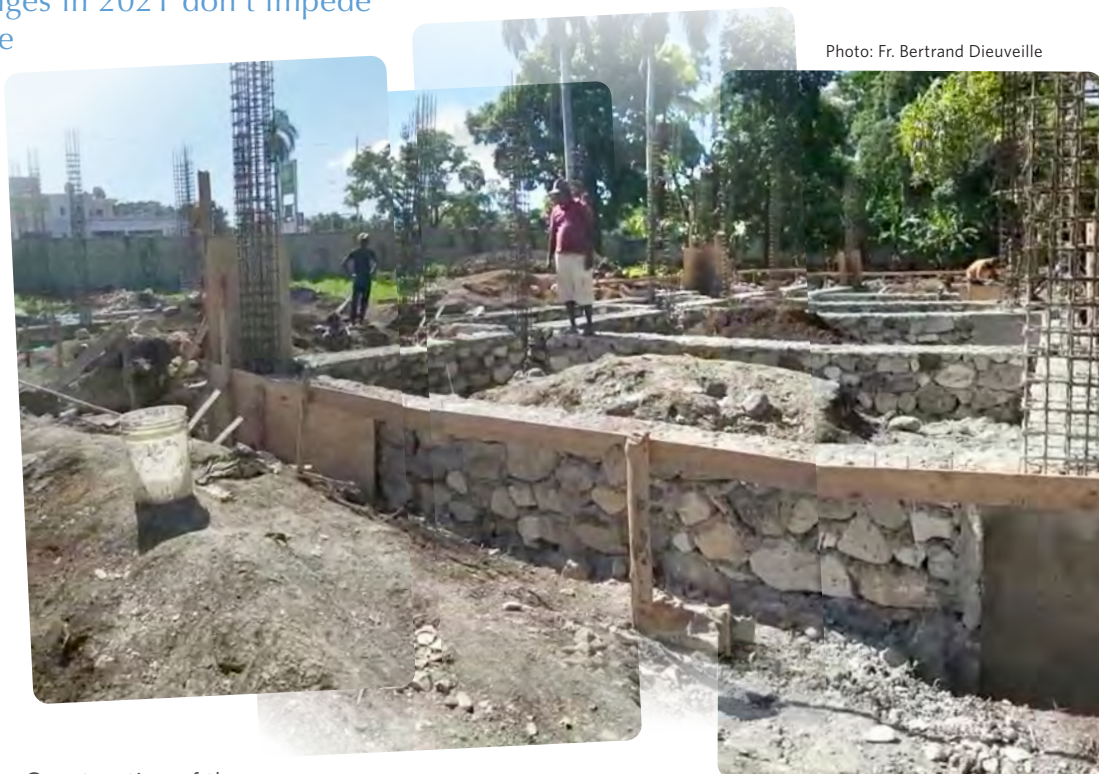


Photo: Fr. Bertrand Dieuveille

Construction of the bakery's stone and cement foundation, hand-dug by a local contractor, was completed in December, and walls are now going up. The structure is slated for completion and to be operational by September, creating up to 40 jobs and providing bread for the community.

"This project is bringing so many together to work as a team," said Dr. Bonnet. Haitian-based advocates Diocese of Jacmel Bishop Toussaint and Caritas Haiti Director Fr. Bertrand Dieuveille have been joined by unexpected allies *Empire Bakery* in Long Island, NY, which provided the bakery's

equipment at cost, and *Food for the Poor*, an international relief organization based in Florida, which will cover the cost of shipping the equipment from Miami to Haiti.

As Jesus told his disciples, "In the world you will have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world!" \*



**CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK**  
March 8-14, 2022

Join us for a week of celebration, prayer and activities. Share about a sister in your life and follow us for more details at [FelicianSistersNA.org/CSW](https://www.FelicianSistersNA.org/CSW).

### Felician Sisters of North America 2021 Year in Review

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## Reimagining Space: Felician properties take on new life



While the Felician spirit is firmly rooted in Blessed Mary Angela's example to serve compassionately, it evolves to meet modern needs including environmental stewardship. That's why recent opportunities, focused on repurposing property, have resulted in successful outcomes for people in need—and our bottom line.

After **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart** convent in Coraopolis, PA, consolidated offices and residences, the vacant floors were leased to Holy Family Institute (HFI), a local human services provider. HFI's *Journey of Hope* program provides housing, care and education for immigrant children as they await reunification with their families. The heightening border crisis created an overflow at HFI, and leasing the convent space allowed them to expand their capacity and offer a safe environment for more vulnerable children.

In Buffalo, the former **Villa Maria Academy** will be transformed into **Angela's House**, a 67-unit apartment building for low-income and homeless seniors. The \$22 million project funded through federal and local grants, and historic tax credit equity, broke ground in August 2021 and is planned for completion in June 2022.

Through thoughtful property repurposing, we continue to ensure the financial generosity of donors goes further and serves as many people as possible. \*