



MISSION MATTERS

monthly



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BLESSED MARY ANGELA SAYS: (Foundress of the Felician Sisters)

"You are given the gift of time to use wisely and to do good... I urge you, do not waste one precious moment of that time."

CATHOLIC Q&A

What is the true meaning of advent?

Click [here](#) for the answer

INTERFAITH CALENDAR

Click [here](#) for more information

12/06: St. Nicholas Day - Christian
12/07-15: Hanukkah - Judaism
12/08: Bodhi Day - Buddhism
12/08: Immaculate Conception: Catholic Christian
12/12: Our Lady of Guadalupe - Catholic Christian
12/16-25: Posadas Navidenas - Hispanic Christian
12/22: Yule/Winter Solstice - Pagan
12/25: Christmas - Christian
12/25: Feast of the Nativity: Orthodox Christian
12/26: Zarathosht Diso - Zoroastrian
12/26-Jan. 1: Kwanzaa - African American
12/30: Holy Family - Catholic Christian

CELEBRATING GOD'S HUMILITY

Saint Francis and 800 Years of the Christmas Crèche

By John Quigley, OFM

Saint Francis of Assisi was profoundly impressed by the simplicity and the poverty of God, who entered our world as a poor person. In his exuberance and passionate love for the incarnation of God that is revealed in Jesus of Nazareth, Francis invented a dramatic way to preach about this mystery. In 1223 he created the first Christmas crib so that the people around the Italian village of Greccio could have a practical and personal experience of the incarnation of Jesus and what it meant for ordinary people.

On Christmas Eve, St. Francis invited the people of the region into a cave that he had filled with straw and animals. He wanted them to feel the heat generated by the animals in the stable and to smell the damp hay crammed into the cave's close quarters. He prepared a crib that was originally intended for the animals' food as a resting place for the infant Christ. A tradition tells us that during the liturgy, while Francis was preaching with deep feeling about God's love, the child Jesus appeared and rested in Francis' arms.



The cave was a small, cramped space—quite unpleasant, certainly not exotic or romantic, particularly for farming people who labored in such conditions on a daily basis. However, it was a dramatic and practical demonstration of how God had entered and continues to enter into their familiar world. God, who is infinite love, shared their lot and lived as one of them.

For St. Francis, Christmas reveals good news about God that we could never come upon by ourselves. Unprompted by us, God chose to become a human person by entering the universe through Mary's womb. This wonderful, good news saves us from inadequate images of God. The message of God choosing to live among us is the reason for such a great celebration by humans.

Click [here](#) to read full article.

CELEBRATING HANUKKAH

Chanukah/Hanukkah began on December 7 and ends on December 15. Click [here](#) to learn more.



CELEBRATING KWANZAA

Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday which celebrates family, community and culture. It begins December 26, 2022 and ends on January 1, 2024. Click [here](#) to learn more.



OUR CORE VALUES

Respect for
Human Dignity



Compassion



TRANSFORMATION



Solidarity with
People in Need



Justice
and Peace

2023-2024 Focus

TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY - A VILLA COMMUNITY PARTNER PROFILE: Feed More of WNY

by Matthew Helminski, Class of '25, PTA

Feed More of WNY is a non-profit independent organization, who works alongside the Food Bank of WNY and also the Meals on Wheels organization. These organizations have been very impactful in touching the lives of many throughout the WNY community for a combined 90 years. In 2019, the two organizations had combined together to form the Feed More WNY organization. Feed More WNY's mission is to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to develop dignity, hope and a brighter future. Some of the services, which this organization continues to offer are: providing nutritious foods to individuals who are in need, friendship and skills training to equip community members. In addition, providing nutrition assistance and education has been a vital resource to the community. Furthermore, the community meal services program continues to be quite impactful in providing healthy nutritious foods to organizations like hospitals, schools, nursing homes and food pantries throughout the WNY community for people in need. With the holidays around the corner, the organization had completed another successful year of "Operation Rock out Hunger". Some of the event sponsors had included 97 Rock, Kaleida Health and Channel 7 WKBW. Frozen turkeys, non-perishable food items and funds were collected to help those in need during the holiday season. The donations that are collected each year greatly assist hungry families, children, older community members and veterans throughout the WNY community. Their overall goal is to ensure that no individual goes hungry and that their needs are being met, while also demonstrating a positive impact on the lives of so many. Villa Maria College has worked with Feed More over the last few years during our annual Day of Service. Those who have participated have been very impressed by their operation and the scope of their services. Learn more about them at <https://www.feedmorewny.org/>.

The Food Bank &
Meals on Wheels are now
FeedMore
wny

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SOCIAL JUSTICE Safe Migration Helps End Human Trafficking

By Freedom United

Send a message to the U.S. states to stop the rollbacks of child labor laws that disproportionately facilitate the trafficking and exploitation of migrant children. Call for genuine anti-trafficking immigration policies.

Around the world, a lack of safe migration routes combined with punitive immigration policies have contributed to increasing vulnerabilities to human trafficking and modern slavery for people on the move. Governments are using anti-trafficking rhetoric to justify these harmful policies.

Despite claims by governments¹ that tighter border controls will prevent human trafficking, the opposite is true. Evidence shows that when people crossing borders are forced to take irregular routes, they are at greater risk of exploitation as a result of having to circumnavigate tightly restricted borders. Governments around the world must stop using anti-trafficking rhetoric to promote support for harmful immigration policies that instead increase trafficking risks and undermine trafficking victims' rights.

Hostile immigration policies perpetuate modern slavery and exploitation in various ways. For some, arriving in a new country through irregular routes is the only option available to build a better life or escape situations of persecution, violence and exploitation in their country of origin. This creates a point of vulnerability that traffickers can then exploit, knowing that people migrating through dangerous routes without the required legal documentation are unlikely to report exploitation to the authorities given their insecure immigration status.

Immigration law should never supersede the systems designed to provide protection and support for trafficking victims and survivors. Yet all too often, states' anti-trafficking strategies are tied to immigration priorities, harming trafficking victims in the process. Click [here](#) to learn more and take action.



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www.villa.edu

The Felician Sisters of Our Lady of Hope Province:

Click [here](#) for more
information

The Association of Franciscan Colleges & Universities:

Click [here](#) for more
information and
resources

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