

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 22, 2022

Media Contact: Laura Bowman

[lbowman@catholicextension.org](mailto:lbowman@catholicextension.org)

Laura: 512.913.6624

## **Founder of Tucson Nonprofit Receives Catholic Extension's Lumen Christi Award**

*Jean Fedigan, founder of Sister José Women's Center, serves homeless and trafficked women*

Chicago, IL — [Catholic Extension](#) is proud to announce today that Jean Fedigan, an outstanding faith leader in the Diocese of Tucson, is the 2022-2023 recipient of the [Lumen Christi Award](#). The Lumen Christi Award, established in 1978, is Catholic Extension's highest honor and is awarded to people who radiate and reveal the light of Christ present in the communities where they serve.

This year, [40 dioceses submitted nominations](#) for the award. Out of the 40 nominations, seven were chosen as award finalists and received \$10,000 to support and enhance their ministry. Fedigan—this year's Award recipient—was given a \$50,000 grant to support her work among the poor and vulnerable.

"This year's Lumen Christi Award Recipient, Jean Fedigan, continues a beautiful legacy of the Catholic people of Tucson, who have always understood that our faith comes alive when we go to the peripheries. It was no accident that Jean's ministry to homeless women was born out of her parish, Our Mother of Sorrows, in Tucson, and was inspired by a Native American spiritual leader, Sr. Jose Hobday," said Fr. Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension.

Fedigan founded the nonprofit Sister José Women's Center (SJWC) in 2009, while still serving as chief nursing officer at University of Arizona Healthcare Hospital. The center is dedicated to the care of homeless and trafficked women living on the streets of Tucson. More than just providing shelter, the center seeks to ensure that these women feel loved, respected, and assured of their human dignity. Her compassion is freely offered to all without judgment because she sees the face of Christ in all whom she meets. Many guests have simply told her, 'You made me feel human today.'

Most of the women who come to SJWC suffer with mental illness, live on the streets, and face nightly threats of violence. These women wake up and, as Fedigan says, ask themselves, "How do I survive today?" Fedigan established SJWC to combat the dehumanizing realities that homeless women face each day.

Fedigan continued, "For me, this became an incredible journey of faith. I get up in the morning, I go to my prayer space, and I always say to God, 'where do you need me today?'"

The Center began in a 750-square-foot house that could sleep 11 women at a time, to its current 25,000-square-foot center, which has allowed Jean and hundreds of volunteers to serve thousands of women.

Catholic Extension has supported the Diocese of Tucson for nearly 120 years. Much of Catholic Extension's support has been and continues to be directed to supporting ministries to native peoples and other vulnerable populations of the diocese.

To read more about Jean Fedigan and the Lumen Christi Award, visit <http://www.catholicextension.org/lumen-christi-award>.

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**About Catholic Extension:** Founded in 1905, Catholic Extension works in solidarity with people to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities among the poor and in America's poorest regions. For more information visit [www.catholicextension.org](http://www.catholicextension.org); follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/catholicextension](https://www.facebook.com/catholicextension) or on Twitter at [@CathExtension](https://twitter.com/CathExtension).