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**Sister Mary Anita Bienia will trade serving the patients of Westmoreland Hospital for serving the poor in Rome. Her participation in Excelsa Health's WalkingSpree program helped prepare the medical technologist for this new assignment. Walking more than 20,000 steps each day as part of the health system's Million Step Challenge, the almost 70-year-old sister in the Felician Franciscan order has the stamina required to fulfill the requirements of this new job.**

#### **FELICIAN NUN TRADES TEST TUBES FOR SANDWICHES**

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**GREENSBURG, PA, Jan. 29, 2012** ... Sister Mary Anita Bienia wasn't looking for new employment, but when she read the job description, she met a qualification that no other candidate could top.

Sister Anita, a member of the Felician Franciscan order, possesses the attributes of kindness and respect for all humanity that are hallmarks of her religious community. But she also has the demonstrated stamina necessary to fulfill her latest calling – serving the poor in Rome.

For the past decade, she has been a medical technologist in the Laboratory at Excelsa Westmoreland Hospital. During the last nine months as a participant in Excelsa Health's WalkingSpree program, she regularly quadrupled the average daily step count, walking as many as 30,000 steps on any given day.

Just before Christmas, she responded to an appeal from her order for a willing participant to take responsibility for a ministry to the poor of Rome. The letter read “We strongly ask for one sister to assume the full-time ministry. This sister needs to be willing to serve the poor at our gate ....and to be physically able to walk well.”

“I feel just like the Apostles who left their fishing nets to follow Christ,” said Sister Anita. “Without hesitation, I said yes. I don’t know how long the assignment will last, or all that’s involved, but I’m willing and able.”

According to the correspondence from Sister Mary Barbara Ann Bosch, Minister General of the Congregation of Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice, the Felician sisters have been preparing and serving sandwiches daily to those who come to the gate of the generalate community in Rome. “As a result of the current dire economic situation and high unemployment rate on some days there are almost 50 to 60 persons who come to the gate, not just jobless men, but mothers and their children. There are days that almost 100 persons have come to us for food.”

Heretofore, the task has been shared among several nuns, taking them away from other duties. In February, Sister Anita will assume total responsibility for this outreach.