

For Immediate Release
September 25, 2020

Contact: Lisa Volk
(518) 462-4800 Ext. 15

**SISTER MARY BENEDICTA DEGA, FSST RECEIVES
VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

ALBANY, N.Y. – Sister Mary Benedicta Dega, FSST has received the 2020 Spiritual Guidance Volunteer of the Year Award from the New York State Health Facilities Association/New York State Center for Assisted Living (NYSHFA/NYSCAL).

Sister Mary Benedicta Dega, FSST received the award for her volunteer service at Autumn View Health Care Facility in Hamburg, New York. As a spiritual volunteer, Sr. Dega provides visitation to the residents and patients in the Journeys palliative care program at Autumn View; serves as the facility chaplain; leads prayer and communion services; provides rosary recitation and Stations of the Cross; distributes prayers and information about feasts in the church; provides support to residents and staff and creates gifts for the holidays. She was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and resides in Hamburg NY. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Rosary Hill College (Daemen College) and Master of Arts degrees from Marquette University and St. John Vianney Seminary. She also earned post-graduate credits from St. Bonaventure University and Xavier University.

Sr. Dega is a Franciscan Sister of St. Joseph. She taught elementary and high school for 40 years serving as principal and supervisor. She also worked as a surgical chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital for 10 years and as the director of pastoral care at Long Island Jewish Medical Center for 15 years. She also worked at St. Mary's Hospital in Brooklyn and served as the director of religious education in Albion. In her spare time, she enjoys crocheting, crossword puzzles, writing poetry, creative writing, making board decorations and flower arranging.

“Sister Dega’s commitment and dedication to our residents is greatly appreciated,” said Aaron Polanski, administrator of Autumn View Health Care Facility. “Her volunteerism is truly exemplary and deserving of this prestigious award from NYSHFA/NYSCAL.”

NYSHFA/NYSCAL’s Volunteer of the Year Awards Program recognizes outstanding volunteers serving in skilled nursing facilities. Winners receive an engraved obelisk and were be honored during the NYSHFA/NYSCAL Virtual Annual Conference on September 24th.

-30-

The New York State Health Facilities Association/New York State Center for Assisted Living (NYSHFA/NYSCAL) is a member-driven association of providers of long term care services, caring for individuals of all ages in proprietary, not-for-profit, and government-sponsored skilled nursing, post-acute, rehab, adult care and assisted living communities across the state of New York. NYSHFA/NYSCAL is dedicated to assisting its members in achieving excellence in the provision of efficient and effective quality long term care services through leadership, professional development and active involvement in the shaping of public policy.