

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

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**Press Release**

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**Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan to Post Historical Decree  
On Cathedral Doors Officially Informing the People of God of the  
Cause of Beatification and Canonization of  
Maria Rosa Segale aka Sr. Blandina Segale, SC**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**Sunday, June 29, 2014 at 3:00 PM**

**Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Santa Fe, NM**

*This is the first time in New Mexico's Roman Catholic Church's over  
400 year history a decree opening the cause of beatification and  
canonization has been declared.*



*(Photo courtesy Palace of the Governor's  
Photo Archives (NMHD/DCA) Negative  
#67735)*

ALBUQUERQUE, NM –Friday, June 29, 2014- IMMEDIATE RELEASE--Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan



will post the historical decree officially informing the people of God of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Maria Rosa Segale aka Sr. Blandina Segale, SC. The decree announces the Vatican's immediate permission to open the Sainthood Cause of Servant of God, Sr. Blandina Segale, SC on Sunday, June 29, 2014 at 3:00 pm. The historical event will take place at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Santa Fe, NM the during the La

Conquistadora/ Our Lady of Peace Vespers and Procession to Rosario Chapel located at Rosario Cemetery in Santa Fe. A delegation representing the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati will include Sr. Victoria Forde, SC, official delegate; Sr. Celestia Koebel, SC, former administrator of St. Joseph Hospital, Albuquerque; and Sr. Monica Luca, SC.

Archbishop Sheehan received permission from the Vatican last week to open the cause of beatification via the Pontifical Congregation for the Cause of Saints. Archbishop Sheehan was named Judge for the Cause; Most Rev. Ricardo Ramirez, Bishop Emeritus of Las Cruces, has been named Postulator; and Mr. Allen Sánchez, President and CEO of CHI St. Joseph's Children, is designated as Petitioner.

CHI St. Joseph's Children (St. Joseph Community Health) Board of Directors approved a motion to petition the canonization of Sr. Blandina Segale, SC at their May 28, 2013 board meeting. **CHI St. Joseph's Children is an organization founded by Sr. Blandina Segale, SC.** Contact: Allen Sánchez 505.319.3334--END



(Photo courtesy Palace of the Governor's Photo Archives (NMHD/DCA) Negative #67735)

## ***Background information***

### **Servant of God, Maria Rosa Segale (Sr. Blandina Segale, SC)**

The Servant of God, Maria Rosa Segale (Sr. Blandina Segale, SC) was born January 23, 1850 in Cicagna, Italy. Her family migrated to Cincinnati, OH when she was four years old. Her first word as a child was Gesu (Jesus).

On September 13, 1866 the Servant of God entered the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. She was sent to work in the newly acquired territories of the western United States in 1872. Arriving first in Trinidad, CO, Sr. Blandina taught the poor. In 1877 she was transferred to Santa Fe, NM where she cofounded the public and Catholic schools. Her work included starting hospitals in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Her work in these territories is well documented in the publication of letters to her sister, also a Sister of Charity, called *At the End of the Santa Fe Trail*.

Other heroic virtues include her tireless work of teaching and healing the immigrant, the marginalized, the poor, and advocating for women and children. She challenged the occupying government and military in fair treatment of the Native Americans. Sr. Blandina came to the aid of mistreated railroad workers, finding time to care for the sick while building orphanages, hospitals, schools, and trade schools.

Her compassion converted hundreds and she even had numerous encounters with the famous Billy the Kid and his band of outlaws. She calmed mobs of armed men from taking the law into their own hands and helped criminals seek forgiveness from their victims, and even saved a man from a hanging party by facilitating reconciliation between him and the man he shot before he died. In 1966 this story of bravery was told in a CBS series *Death Valley Days* episode "The Fastest Nun in the West" where she faced down the barrels of guns to find justice. One account is her prevention of Hispanic and Native American's loss of homes and land to swindlers and another is saving a lost horse drawn wagon of passengers during a winter blizzard and reaching safety in blackout conditions.

In 1897 she founded the Santa Maria Institute in Cincinnati, serving immigrants. She led the organization until 1933. The institute is still in operation today, serving the poor and marginalized.

In 1900 Sr. Blandina returned to Albuquerque for two years to help start the St. Joseph Hospital whose mission continues today as CHI St. Joseph's Children, also known as St. Joseph Community Health.

Her ministries continue today, over 100 years later, and thousands of poor children receive early childhood service by her continuing ministry. Many of the adobe structures Sr. Blandina built still stand today as monuments to her courage. For example, in Old Albuquerque the convent bears her name. Her life's work is well documented in the archives of the Sisters of Charity Mother House in Cincinnati.

Sr. Blandina was one of the petitioners of the Cause of St. Elizabeth Seton, and at 81 years old she traveled to Italy to meet with Pope Pius to plead St. Elizabeth's Cause. The Servant of God died on February 23, 1941 in Cincinnati at the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity at the age of 91. Her last words were Gesu e Madre.

Contact: Allen Sánchez 505.319.3334—END

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**Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan to Hold Joint Press Conference with  
CHI St. Joseph's Children to Announce Vatican's Immediate  
Permission to Open the Sainthood Cause of Servant of God,  
Sister Blandina Segale, SC**

**Wednesday, June 25, 2014, 11:00 AM**  
**CHI St. Joseph's Children Facility**  
**1516 5<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102**



ALBUQUERQUE, NM – Tuesday, June 24, 2014- IMMEDIATE RELEASE--  
Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan will hold a joint-press conference with CHI St.

Joseph's Children, Wednesday, June 25, 2014 at 11:00 am to announce the Vatican's immediate permission to open the Sainthood Cause of Servant of God, Sister Blandina Segale, SC. The press conference will be held at CHI St. Joseph's Children Facility located at 1516 5<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Albuquerque, 87102. A delegation from the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati will include Sr. Victoria Forde, SC, official delegate. The historical posting of the official Decree will be displayed on the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi's doors on Sunday, June 29, 2014 at 3pm during La Conquistadora/Our Lady of Peace Vespers and Procession to Rosario Chapel located at Rosario Cemetery in Santa Fe.

Archbishop Sheehan received permission to open the cause of beatification from the Vatican via the Congregation for the Cause of Saints. Archbishop Sheehan was named Judge for the Cause; Most Rev. Ricardo Ramirez, Bishop Emeritus of Las Cruces, has been named Postulator; and Allen Sanchez, President and CEO of CHI St. Joseph's Children, is designated as Petitioner.

**This is the first time in New Mexico's Roman Catholic Church's 400 year history a decree opening the cause of beatification and canonization has been declared.**

CHI St. Joseph's Children (St. Joseph Community Health) Board of Directors approved a motion to petition the canonization of Sr. Blandina Segale, SC at their May 28, 2013 board meeting. Contact: Allen Sanchez 505.319.3334--END