

THE CALLING

*Women who selflessly
choose to dedicate their
lives to God and the
betterment of humanity*





Feb. 7th, 2024

Keith Famie
Filmmaker
Visionalist Entertainment Productions
28345 Beck Road
Suite 404
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

It was great meeting you to discuss the story of “The Calling” and the opportunity to learn more about commitment and dedication from those ladies who choose to serve their community as part of a particular Sister order.

Historical programs that give context to the past, present and future are always popular with our viewers. Framing a narrative that both explains the daily lives of those who have dedicated themselves to the church as well how that experience impacts society in general would be of great interest to the broader public television audience, nationwide.

We look forward to celebrating the impactful story of the lives of the Sisters when the film is completed in 2025.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred'.

Fred Nahhat
Senior VP, Production
Detroit Public TV

THE CALLING

OVERVIEW

When people think of nuns and sisters today, various images may come to mind. Some may think of Mother Teresa, while others may imagine a stern woman in a habit disciplining a school child. Hollywood's portrayal in films like *Sister Act* may even strike the imagination. For decades, Catholic sisters have been at the forefront of healthcare, education, combating poverty, and the advancement of women.

Women join religious communities for a variety of reasons, both religious and nonreligious. In the past, when women had limited options and lacked the freedom of choice that exists today, becoming a nun was one of the few paths available to them. By choosing this path, women were able to receive education from religious orders. This education was crucial as it provided them with the necessary understanding of biblical teachings, enabling them to have a voice in spaces where they would not typically be heard.

During the medieval ages, nuns and sisters played a significant role in the community by providing service to the sick and poor, as well as assisting in the burial of the deceased. In those times, the wealthy received nursing care in their homes, while convents served as hospitals for the less fortunate. Nuns were highly respected, with their prayers considered more powerful than those of monks. They were seen as the brides of Christ, and thus believed to be closer to God than their male counterparts.

Women religious began arriving in the United States in the early 1700s, and they became pioneers in the establishment of hospitals. By 1900, American sisters had opened over 500 hospitals, including the renowned Mayo Clinic, founded by the Franciscan Sisters.

These dedicated women not only managed the hospitals, but also cultivated the food served there, sewed bed linens for the patients, and most importantly, served as nurses, doctors, and technicians. Additionally, they raised funds and resources to support tuition-free schools for the underprivileged and immigrant communities, as well as established finishing schools for young girls.

The 1960s brought about significant changes within the church, offering women more options beyond convent life. This resulted in a decline in the number of women entering sisterhood. Since the Second Vatican Council, the number of sisters and nuns, particularly in the United States, has dramatically decreased. In 1965, there were approximately 180,000 sisters in the United States, whereas today, there are fewer than 50,000, with the remaining having a median age in their 70s.

Despite this decline, it is evident that women are still being called to serve and continue to make valuable contributions to communities worldwide. Today, we can find sisters working in domestic abuse shelters, as probation officers, involved in low-income housing projects, and are even serving at the forefront of environmental conservation and working towards eradicating human trafficking.

In this 2025 Detroit PBS film, award-winning producer/director Keith Famie and his team at Visionalist Entertainment Productions, will venture beyond the convent door to gain a deeper understanding of the lives of religious sisters. These remarkable women selflessly choose to dedicate their lives to God and the betterment of humanity, often facing misconceptions and misunderstandings along the way.



FEATURED ORDERS



Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM)

610 West Elm Ave.

Monroe, MI 48162

- The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of are committed to proclaiming the Gospel message in the spirit of Jesus the Redeemer. The Sisters work in the Congregation's corporate apostolate of Catholic education as well as in catechetical, pastoral, hospital and prison ministries, parenting programs, counseling, literacy instruction, adult spirituality programs, care of the infirm, retreat work and campus ministry.



Felician Sisters

36800 Schoolcraft Rd.

Livonia, MI 48150

- Since our arrival in North America in 1874, Felician Sisters have led the way in building the social service landscape by serving those in need, supporting refugees, providing education, fighting injustice, caring for the sick, sharing spiritual wisdom, empowering women, defending the planet, advocating for peace, fostering community and offering hope.



Sisters of Mercy

30201 Orchard Lake Rd., Suite 115
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

- The Sisters of Mercy are an international community of Roman Catholic women who dedicate our lives to the Gospel of Jesus and take vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and service. In addition to the three vows that all Catholic sisters take, Sisters of Mercy also take a fourth vow of service.



Chaldean Sisters, Daughters of Mary Immaculate

St. Thomas Chaldean Catholic Church
6900 W. Maple Rd.
West Bloomfield Township, MI 48322

- The Congregation of the Chaldean Daughters of Mary Immaculate is an apostolic Congregation of patriarchal right. It was founded in Baghdad on August 7, 1922, at the time of Patriarch Mar Yousif Emmanuel II Toma, for the good of the Church and the world.



Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist

4597 Warren Rd.

Ann Arbor, MI 48105

- The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist began in 1997 with their four foundresses: Mother Assumpta, Sr. Mary Samuel, Sr. Joseph Andrew, and Sr. John Dominic. Their foundresses believed that the spirituality of St. Dominic had much to contribute to the New Evangelization. They also knew that for their efforts to be successful, they needed to center our entire lives around the Eucharist.



LETTERS OF SUPPORT



Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

March 18, 2024

Keith Famie, Filmmaker
Visionalist Entertainment
28345 Beck Road
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

On behalf of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I accept the invitation to be a part of your film, *The Calling*. Most who have any experience remember IHMs fondly from their days as students. What do they know about the lives of the IHM Sisters now?

Our mission to serve those with the least in our society often goes unseen. We hope that *The Calling* will spotlight women religious' work and, consequently, have a new generation work alongside our sisters to provide for the underserved. We also look forward to sharing how our sisters have grown and adapted to the many changes since Vatican II. The importance of this film can't be understated.

With your 20 years of experience in documentary filmmaking and history of producing films that highlight religious life, we are confident you are the person to share our stories. We look forward to partnering with you.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Herb, IHM
President



May 2, 2024

SJMK-108

Keith Famie, Filmmaker
Visionalist Entertainment
28345 Beck Road
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

On behalf of the Felician Sisters of North America, I accept the invitation to be a part of your film, *The Calling*.

Our mission is to serve where we are needed and to cooperate with Christ in the salvation of the world. We trust that your film, *The Calling*, will highlight how we are committed to doing that in the Detroit area. We look forward to the ways in which your film will inform viewers of the of ministries that our sisters are involved in and how our ministries continue to evolve. We are confident that your film will make a significant impact on public awareness of how much is being accomplished and how much more needs to be done.

We look forward to our partnership with you on this important project.

Peace and all good things!

S Judith M Kubicki, CSSF
Provincial Minister



May 8, 2024

Dear Keith Famie,

I want to express my gratitude for the production of *Detroit: City of Faith*. It was truly a wonderful experience to have our church and faith featured in this documentary. Including our Chaldean Christian community was deeply meaningful to us, and the response from our community members has been overwhelming. We have received many messages expressing joy and appreciation for the documentary's portrayal of our faith on PBS.

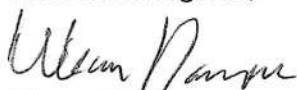
As you continue your incredible work on your upcoming documentary, *The Calling*, I would like to propose the inclusion of our Chaldean Sisters. Their stories are a vital part of our community, and documenting their experiences would serve as a powerful testament to their strength and resilience.

The Chaldean Sisters have played a significant role in shaping our community, and their stories deserve to be shared with a wider audience. By featuring them in *The Calling*, we can shed light on the challenges they have overcome, the impact they have made, and the inspiring journeys they have embarked upon in pursuit of their calling.

I understand the immense effort and dedication it takes to create such impactful documentaries and value your commitment to telling stories that resonate with diverse communities. I believe that including our Chaldean Sisters in *The Calling* would be a powerful addition, amplifying the voices of those who have often been underrepresented.

Thank you once again for your work. Your continued efforts to highlight the experiences of faith communities are much appreciated, and we are grateful for the positive impact your documentaries have made.

With warm regards,


Weam Namou



DOMINICAN SISTERS OF MARY, MOTHER OF THE EUCHARIST

4597 WARREN RD.
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105
PH. (734) 994-7437
FX. (734) 994-7438
E-MAIL: sjab@sistersofmary.org
www.sistersofmary.org

March 13, 2025

Keith Famie, Filmmaker
Visionalist Entertainment
28345 Beck Road
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Mr. Famie,

On behalf of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, I am honored to accept your invitation to feature our community in your upcoming documentary, *The Calling*. There is a beautiful story to be told about religious life, and we are excited to be part of this project.

We are a relatively new religious community in Michigan, founded only in 1997. The contribution of so many religious in our state cannot be underestimated in all that has been done through prayer and works of mercy. We are deeply grateful for the example of fidelity of these various religious communities.

The charism of our community is Eucharistic and Marian in the Dominican tradition. In other words, we are rooted in prayer and give the fruit of that prayer to others. Our apostolate is education, teaching all ages and subjects in the light of the Gospel. We also have a media apostolate, Openlight Media, with the mission of teaching the Catholic faith and promoting the practice of the virtues.

We look forward to working with you to share how God has called us to serve Him alongside so many other religious communities.

In Jesus and Mary,

Mother Amata Veritas Ellenbecker, OP
Prioress General
Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist



Carmelite Sisters - Monastery of St. Therese
35750 Moravian Drive, Clinton Township, MI 48035

July 3, 2024

Keith Famie
Visionalist Entertainment
28345 Beck Road, Suite 404
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Friends,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

We are touched and excited to be asked to be a part of "The Calling". What a wonderful project to place before the public for the glory of God. Religious Life has, sadly, been parodied and ridiculed by some of a worldly mind. Yet, it is beautiful beyond description for those who live it faithfully. May your efforts be abundantly blessed and bear holy and lasting fruits. The prayers and support of each of us will be with you.

Sincerely,
Mother Mary Therese OCD



ALLIANCE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Founded and Supported by U.S. Catholic Sisters

Keith Famie, Filmmaker
Visionalist Entertainment
28345 Beck Road
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

On behalf of the Alliance to End Human Trafficking, I happily accept the invitation to be a part of your film, *The Calling*. The Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending human trafficking through prevention education, legislative and consumer advocacy, and promoting access to services for survivors, is a product of the coming together of over a 115 congregations of US women's religious communities—many of them from the great state of Michigan. That is a founding steeped in social justice that can only be found in the dedication and faith of Catholic Sisters.

We are excited to have you and your team working on this film which will shine a light on the good work that Catholic sisters in Michigan have done historically and are still doing in the present day. With your experience in documentary filmmaking, I am certain that you will do an admirable job sharing our story. We look forward to partnering with you.

In gratitude,

Katie Boller Gosewisch,
Executive Director
Alliance to End Human Trafficking



Nov. 21st, 2024

Mr. Keith Famie
Visionalist Entertainment Productions

Dear Keith,

The question of why it is important to feature African-American sisters in the film ***The Calling*** is both straightforward and complex, embodying layers of significance that resonate deeply within our spiritual communities. At its core, the simple answer is that these remarkable women exist; they lead rich, fulfilling lives and have received the same sacraments and anointings as the Sisters portrayed in the film. Their presence is a vital part of the tapestry of faith that enriches our understanding of community and service.

The complicated answer is that of offense to the sensibilities of the God we are each called to serve – because God is a God of all. The entire public ministry of Jesus Christ is a true witness to that. African-American sisters are reflections of the Christ who walked the earth, as our New Testament reads. The more profound element is one of committed faith despite the injustices that have presented and, in many cases, prevented African-American sisters from being accepted into the communities that existed, or came from Europe, or were formed in this country, just because of the societal dysfunctions that exist even in our church. Despite that – vows have been taken, and lives have been devoted to serving the same God.

I invite you to explore their stories further as we reflect on their contributions. I encourage you to visit the National Black Sisters' Conference website, where you can listen to their narratives in their own voices. These stories are not just testimonies of individual experiences but powerful reminders of the diverse and vibrant faith community within our church. In engaging with their journeys, you will encounter the God who cherishes us all, a God who calls us to love and uplift one another.

Together, let us celebrate the rich contributions of African-American sisters and acknowledge the transformative role they play in our spiritual landscape. By amplifying their voices and sharing their experiences, we can foster greater understanding, inclusivity, and unity within our communities.

Wishing you peace and well-being, as we embark on this journey of discovery and celebration together.

Sandra Coles-Bell
Executive Director
National Black Sisters' Conference

National Black Sisters' Conference
415 Michigan Ave. N.E., Suite 102
McCormick Pavilion at Theological College, Washington, DC 20017

EMMY AWARD-WINNING VISIONALIST ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS

WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1997 BY PRODUCER / DIRECTOR KEITH FAMIE. SINCE THESE EARLY YEARS, FAMIE AND HIS TEAM HAVE PRODUCED A WIDE RANGE OF PRIMETIME PROGRAMS.

DOCUMENTARIES

Ice Warriors (2005) An action-packed journey with the Detroit Red Wings' Alumni team through Russia.

Our Italian Story (2006) Progress, passion and promise – Detroit's Italian heritage.

Our Arab American Story (2007) Reverence, resourcefulness and respect- Detroit's Arab American Heritage.

Our Greek Story (2007) Antiquity, modernity, and destiny- Detroit's Greek Heritage.

Our Polish Story (2007) Family, faith and fortitude- Detroit's Polish Heritage.

Our India Story (2008) Amity, diversity and sovereignty- Detroit's Indian Heritage.

Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009) A tribute to our Michigan WWII veterans, both men and women, who fought for the freedom of our families and our country.

Our Vietnam Generation (2011) A long overdue welcome home to the men and women who served during Vietnam.

Can You See How I See? (2011) An inspiring look into the life of those who are without sight.

One Soldier's Story (2011) the profound story of Sgt. Michael Ingram, Jr. and his legacy.

The Embrace of Aging: Men's Series (2012) 13-part series on men and 7-part series on women.

The Embrace of Aging: Women's Series (2014) 13-part series on women and 7-part series on men.

The Embrace of Dying (2015) 8-part series on how we deal with the end of life.

Maire's Journey (2016) Follow Maire Kent as she sets sail on an epic journey to fulfill her dying wish.

Death is NOT the Answer (2016) A deep look into the complex world of depression and suicide.

Enlisted (2017) Choice. Adventure. Growth. Why would one enlist in the military?

Those on the Front Lines of Alzheimer's & Dementia (2018) What can be done to stop this truly devastating disease?

Those on the Front Lines of Cancer (2019) Can the uncommon journey that cancer patients undergo result in anything positive?

Blessed Solanus Casey's Journey to Sainthood (2019) How does a humble boy from Irish immigrant parents rise to the rare and distinguished honor of beautification?

Shoah Ambassadors (2021) An educational journey two young non-Jewish individuals go on with those who survived the Holocaust.

Hospice Care in America Today (2022) Where did Hospice originate? Why is this service so important for end of life care?

Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower? (2022) A story of those living and thriving with Down Syndrome.

Detroit: The City of Churches (2022) The significance the many Detroit churches played on some of the most iconic moments in Detroit's history.

Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars (2023) Celebrating Detroit's hot rod & muscle car community & how the Motor City has shaped world culture.

Detroit: The City of Faith (2024) Shining the light on the Christian community and those early immigrants who made their way to the Motor City in search of the American dream.

MICHIGAN EMMY AWARD WINNERS

Taste of Taiwan (2006) On-Camera Talent – Keith Famie

Our Italian Story (2006)
Best Human Interest Special, Best Director

Our Polish Story (2007)
Best Director: Post-Production

Our Greek Story (2007)
Best Cultural Documentary,
Best Human Interest Program Special

Our Arab American Story (2007)
Societal Concerns Program Special

Our India Story (2008)
Best Documentary Cultural

Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009)
Best Editor

Our Vietnam Generation (2011)
Best Documentary Historical

The Embrace of Aging: The Female Perspective of Growing Old (2014)
Best Director: Post-Production

Shoah Ambassadors (2021)
Best Director, Best Lighting, Best Editing

Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower? (2022)
Best Human Interest - Long Form Content

Detroit: The City of Churches (2022)
Best Director, Best Editing, Best Photography, Best Lighting

PRODUCTIONS IN 2024 / 2025

The Razor's Edge: A day in the lives of those that live on the razor's edge of society who face poverty and survival every day with many calling the streets their home.

Detroit: The City of Chefs: The unfiltered story of Detroit's culinary heritage.

The Calling: A deeper understanding of religious sisters who selflessly choose to dedicate their lives to God & the betterment of humanity.

Detroit: Our Hispanic Story: How a Hispanic neighborhood community helped shape Southwest Detroit through their rich culture of food, art, music & faith.

AWARDS & HONORS

2016 - Maire's Journey- DOCUTAH 2016 – International Documentary Film Festival – Winner

2021 - Shoah Ambassadors-

- Toronto Indie Filmmakers Festival - Best Feature Documentary - Winner
- SR Socially Relevant Film Festival NY – Honorable Mention
- Tokyo International Short Film Festival – Honorable Mention
- Austin Lift-Off Film Festival – Official Selection
- LA Documentary Film Festival – Official Selection
- Miami Jewish Festival – Official Selection
- Santa Monica Film Festival – Official Selection
- Malibu Film Festival – Official Selection

2022 - Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?-

- Grand Rapids Film Festival - Award Winner





Keith Famie **Director/Producer/Author**

Director/Producer Keith Famie was, for many years, known as a celebrity chef and a metro Detroit restaurateur. He was selected as one of America's "Best New Chefs" in 1989 by Food and Wine magazine; Esquire Magazine chose his restaurants as "Best New Restaurant" in America on two separate occasions. Famie was also a finalist on the 2001 reality television series, "Survivor, the Australian Outback."

Keith hosted his own Food Network series, "Keith Famie's Adventures," traveling the world documenting cooking styles from the plains of Africa to monk monasteries of Taiwan, to the lifestyle of Key West. In 2004, the Adventure Chef embarked on a new journey - documentary filmmaking. "I didn't want to be the 'Adventure Chef' guy anymore. I wanted to help people tell their stories."

Since that life-changing decision, Famie has been awarded twelve Michigan Emmys and been nominated several other times for his rich, human-interest storytelling, from ethnic documentaries to military tribute films. He and his team at Visionalist Entertainment Productions create informative, entertaining films that touch a wide audience.

Along with documentary filmmaking, Famie has released several books throughout his career, *Famie's Adventures in Cooking* (2001), *You Really Haven't Been There Until You've Eaten the Food* (2003), *Living Through the Lens* (2019), and *Papa's Rules for Life* (2021).

Outside of documentary production, Keith is involved in charitable projects. In 2003, Keith finished the 25th anniversary Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Kona with Team In Training for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. In 2015, he was awarded the 2015 Diamond Award by the Association for Women in Communications Detroit Chapter. In 2017, Keith was presented the Media Award by the Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit, and in 2023, Keith was awarded a Dove Award from The Arc of Oakland County for Media Distinction. Over the years, Keith has been actively involved in several well-respected, Michigan-based 501(c)(3) organizations that support everything from children with cancer and hunger relief to veterans' issues.

Visionalist Entertainment Productions | www.v-prod.com

