



Born to New Life

Sister Dorothy Di Cristofaro, MPF



Sister Dorothy Di Cristofaro, MPF 88, died peacefully on Friday, June 21, 2019, at Saint Joseph Hall after a brief bout with cancer.

Father Ron Sordillo, Pastoral minister at Saint Joseph Hall and celebrant at her Mass of Christian Burial, shared at the closing prayer of the Mass that in all his encounters with Sister Dorothy, her responses were always "Yes." There is only one time I ever heard her respond with a "No" and that was when I asked her if she was afraid to die. This statement gives great insight to the person we honor in this tribute.

Born and raised in Schenectady, New York, Sister Dorothy entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1949. She received her habit in 1950, and made her religious profession in 1953. Sister Dorothy was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Saint John University, New York, and a Masters in English from Villanova University. Initially Sister Dorothy taught in the middle school in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, and the Diocese of Brooklyn, and then taught at Paul VI and Saint Joseph High Schools in the Diocese of Camden and Villa Victoria Academy, Trenton, New Jersey.

Through the years, Sister Dorothy held many administrative roles in the Institute. She served as local superior and formator of postulants in the United States. For twenty-four years (four terms) she was elected General Councilor in Rome. In between these terms as General Councilor Sister Dorothy was sent to Medstead, England, where she held different roles, one being Regional Superior. In total, Sister Dorothy spent thirty-five years abroad. On her return to America in 2013, she served as part time librarian at Villa Walsh Academy for a short time. In 2014, after a stroke, Sister Dorothy became a resident at Saint Joseph Hall and remained there until her passing.

There are only words of praise that resonate at the mention of Sister Dorothy's name. She sacrificed many years away from her homeland, yet always very willingly accepted whatever assignment was given her. She is highly respected, revered and loved by family, her religious community, and all those she ministered to through the years, whether in the United States or abroad.

In his homily, Father Ron raised the question, "What motivated Sister Dorothy?" He continued on to illustrate this.

"Sister Dorothy knew the love of God and she lived in God's love every day of her life. She was obedient to God's call; she was humble, meek and mild in her life; she was proud, feeling great satisfaction being a daughter of God, a Religious Teacher Filippini; she was a devoted, loyal and faithful consecrated religious; she was dearly respected and loved by all; she was gentle, tender and mild-mannered; she was holiness of life lived totally devoted to God and his works; she was a saint striving every day to reveal God to others through her unselfish ways; I am ever blessed to have been able to know Sister Dorothy and minister to her."

In Sister Laura Longo's eulogy, she shared several comments of the sisters who lived in Saint Joseph Hall with Sister Dorothy. These are only a few of the very many:

- *Her love and concern for others is far reaching.*
- *I witnessed such courage in the face of adversity; she will live on in our minds and hearts. Be sure!*
- *Our love for Sister Dorothy knows no bounds. We are sad, but we have gathered as one to support each other while remembering a very special friend.*
- *What will Saint Joseph Hall be like without Sister Dorothy who gave so much of herself, especially her smile.*

This excerpt comes from a letter forwarded by Sister Ascenza, who was in Rome at the time of Sister's funeral.

"In the name of the Province, I thank her for the many sacrificing years of loving, faithful service she spent abroad in Rome and England, fulfilling God's Will being her only desire, purpose and joy. She further accepted the limitations of her stroke these past five years which occurred soon after her return to America and finally the discomfort of a ravishing cancer, all with open hands and heart, "Here I am Lord."

Messages of sympathy and repetitious sentiments of her goodness and holiness have come from every part of the world in these last few days. Sister Dorothy in her unassuming, soft, gentle manner has not only won the hearts of