



Born to New Life

Sister Mary Capozzelli, MPF



Sister Mary Capozzelli, MPF, 100, died Tuesday, October 11, 2016, at Saint Joseph Hall after a long illness. Rev. Anthony Generose of Hazelton, Pennsylvania and friend of Sister Mary and the family celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Her brother, Rev. Msgr. Emmanuel Capozzelli, was among the many concelebrants.

Sister Mary was born and raised in Lattimer Mines, Pennsylvania. She entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1925, received her habit in 1932, and made her final religious profession in 1935. Sister Mary received a Normal School diploma in elementary education.

Most of Sister Mary's years in the apostolate were spent in mission centers: Saint Anthony, Dunmore, Pennsylvania; Saint Anthony, Akron, Ohio; and Saint Rocco, Union City, where Sister Mary spent fifty years of untiring and dedicated service in both the nursery and the parish. She was director of the preschool, and also responsible for the religious education program, and served as musician and sacristan. Her praiseworthy ministry will remain legendary at Saint Rocco Parish.

Sister Mary spent her last five years in active ministry at Saint Francis Xavier School, Newark, New Jersey, as a teacher aide and then retired at Villa Walsh. In addition to other responsibilities, Sister Mary assumed the role of local Superior for thirty-one years. She became a resident at Saint Joseph Hall Infirmary in 2006. Sister Mary will be remembered as a faithful member of the Filippini Sisters, dedicated to mission, gifted, and hard working.

In the absence of Sister Ascenza Tizzano, provincial superior, Sister Laura Longo, provincial councilor, read a letter Sister Ascenza sent in lieu of a eulogy. She stated that from a distance she shares the sentiments of sorrow, joy, pride and thanksgiving and explained what generates these contrasted emotions to stir as we grieve Sister Mary's passing.

"Although Sister Mary entered community at a young age, she retained her love of family and remained close to her brothers and sisters through many years. With their passing, nieces, nephews, and your extended families became an extension of this enduring affection... How many people you know can boast, "Last year we celebrated my Aunt's 100th birthday!"

"... When someone lives to be a hundred plus, and has been divorced from the full circuit of everyday life, it is easy to forget all that one has done. At the same time, for Sister Mary, our forgetting her life's record would not make any difference to her. Sister Mary's concentration and compass focused solely in one direction, and that was to know, love and serve God..."

"... Sister Mary's formation took place in the midst of the community's newly growing venture, and this allowed Sister Mary the privilege to know both Mother Ninetta and Archbishop Walsh personally. Consequently, this early experience of the infant community of only fifteen years fostered in her a strong respect and regard for the Community, its leadership, and its mission. Sustained by a life of prayer, a love for the Mass and deep devotion to our Blessed Mother, her fidelity to each of these never weakened..."

"... Sister Mary prided in excellence, worked wholeheartedly, served joyfully. A farewell celebration for Sister Mary at Saint Rocco's was held during the Easter Season, on Good Shepherd Sunday. What an appropriate image for someone who truly exhibited this role --- Sister Mary, caring, leading, listening, loving, searching, sacrificing! Is it any wonder that she was so admired and sorely missed by those she served upon retirement?..."

"I was told and was very touched by Monsignor's last words to Sister Mary an hour before her passing. Monsignor softly whispered as he kissed her good-bye 'Thank you, you were such a good sister.' Regardless of our relationship to Sister Mary, can't we each echo these same sentiments: 'Thank you, Sister Mary, you were such a good sister!' " May she know eternal rest for a life well lived in God's name.