



Born to New Life

Sister Catherine Sabatini, MPF



“Just a few days ago, a voice from heaven was heard by Sister Catherine Sabatini. The voice said to her, ‘Blessed are those who die in the Lord, the spirit of God is with you to give you rest.’ Sister Catherine listened to that voice and gave herself into the full embrace of God, the God that she served all the days of her life.” These words spoken by Rev. Ron Sordillo, celebrant at Sister Catherine’s Mass of Resurrection, were a meaningful introduction for a sister who ministered with zeal and endured long suffering with dignity.

Sister Catherine Sabatini, MPF, 97 years of age, after nineteen years in the infirmary, died Thursday, February 7, 2019, at Saint Joseph Hall. Sister Catherine was born and raised in Madison, New Jersey. In 1936, she entered the Religious Teachers Filippini and received her habit in 1938. She made her final religious profession in 1941.

Sister Catherine received her BA degree from the College of Saint Elizabeth in Biology and a MS degree from the University of Scranton in Educational Administration. Sister Catherine taught in both the elementary and high school levels in the Archdioceses of Hartford, Connecticut; New York, New York, and in the Dioceses of Trenton, New Jersey, and Scranton, Pennsylvania. She taught high school biology for twenty-four years and then became Dean of Dunmore Central Catholic High School. After retiring from teaching, Sister Catherine was responsible for the school office at Villa Walsh Academy for thirty-one years. Whatever ministry Sister Catherine was involved, she worked enthusiastically and precisely, taking pride in quality results. She was loved by her students and the people she served for her gentle, serene presence and her ability to perform her duties responsibly. Sister Catherine retired from the Academy in 2004. One year later she became a resident at Saint Joseph Hall.

Father Ron’s sentiments were very consoling, knowing Sister Catherine spent so many years in poor health: *“Her death becomes the door way of reward for the things she has done: her faithfulness and service to God accomplished in her loving and generous ways; she transcends all limitations and time, no longer subject to aging, no more physical decline. She is immortal and lives forever in the love and peace of God.”*

In loving tribute to Sister Catherine, these are some sentiments Sister Ascenza expressed:

“When someone is so close to death, it is natural to gather round the bed of your loved one, often just to catch their last words, to grasp the final messages. But that was not the case with Sister Catherine. She rarely verbalized or engaged much in conversation, even before her final days. At the same time, everyone who visited her room left with a good feeling, having to admit that they were touched by Sister Catherine’s quiet company. Her soft manner voiced her peace, serenity, calmness and resignation. Through nineteen years of ill health, this exemplary spirit earned Sister Catherine the respect and love of those who visited her and those who were responsible for her care.

Because so many sisters, who were Sister Catherine’s former students, were sharing their thoughts of her, Sister Ascenza continued by highlighting Sister Catherine, the teacher:

“... Sister Catherine was demanding; held high expectations, but very kind; the best teacher I ever had; grading was very fair; whatever she did was achieved with perfection; treated students with dignity, never embarrassed them; Sister’s goodness influenced my vocation; and the list continued.” One sister noted ‘I loved all my teachers at Saint Anthony’s, but I revered Sister Catherine.’ These comments support the words we so often hear ‘Teachers touch our future.’ These are recalled memories of more than 40 years ago.”

Sister Ascenza explained why she always associated Sister Catherine with roses and went on to make the comparisons.

“... After reflecting on the significance of a rose, I realized more clearly why I associate Sister Catherine with roses. Roses teach us so many of life’s lessons and Sister Catherine has taught us these same lessons. A rose is a precious gift. Sister Catherine, you have been a precious gift to us. Sister Catherine, we know you are at peace, a quality that always defined you. Now enjoy eternal glory where roses have no thorns.”