



## Born to New Life

### Sister Angelina Pecoraro, MPF



*“Jesus said, ‘the hour has come.’ Jesus’ hour was Good Friday, His death on the cross. Monday, April 9th, this year the feast of the Annunciation, when the Word became flesh through Mary’s yes. It is the day Saint Lucy breathed her last as the Angelus bells tolled. Lucy, her yes, her final fiat. On this feast the hour had come for Sister Angelina to go home to the Lord.”* With these words, Father Robert Lynam, Sister Angelina’s former pastor and dear friend, began his moving homily at her Mass of Christian burial.

Sister Angelina Pecoraro at 97, died peacefully early Monday morning, April 9, 2018, at St. Joseph Hall after a long illness. Throughout the week of her passing the sisters surrounded her bed in prayer and with affection. For someone who always feared dying, peace, serenity, and beauty best portray her last journey.

Sister Angelina prided that she was born in the Ironbound section of Newark. To quote her, *“I came from the city, so I feel like I belong to the city.”* Sister Angelina entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1937. She was invested in 1938, and made her final religious profession in 1941. Both her Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education and Masters Degree in General Professional Education were earned at Seton Hall University.

Sister Angelina’s many years of ministry were in the Archdiocese of Newark and the Diocese of Trenton and Metuchen. The heart of her life for more than a half century was teaching first grade and the majority of these years comprised inner city education. Convinced that first grade set the foundation, teaching little ones remained her preference. *“No one could leave my class until they could read the Daily News,”* she frequently boasted. At Saint James, Trenton, Saint Nicholas, Palisades Park, and Saint Anthony, Union City, she served not only as the teacher, but principal and local superior. In 1993, Sister Angelina was awarded *Teacher of the Year*, and in 1999 was honored by the NCEA for her sixty years dedicated to Catholic Education. When no longer able to teach, Sister Angelina served as an administrative assistant at Our Lady of Libera, West New York, and when assigned to Saint Augustine of Canterbury, Kendall Park, her last place of mission, she served as an aide in the school.

Though a *“task master,”* in every place of mission and in every role, Sister Angelina enjoyed her work, loved and was loved by the people she served. A conscientious Filippini Sister, filled with a heart of love, is the legacy she leaves behind. In 2012, Sister Angelina retired at Villa Walsh and became a resident of Saint Joseph Hall in 2013.

In her words of tribute, these are among the sentiments Sister Ascenza expressed: *“A meticulous cleaner, great Italian cook, hard worker, she wanted to be part of the action, and resisted idleness. With these noteworthy traits, you can imagine the pressure her Parkinson’s disease placed upon her when deprived the use of her hands. Serving denoted her person; she needed to search for other ways to define herself as useful and giving...”*

*“While in Saint Joseph Hall, to fill this gap, Angie participated in many of the activities offered. She joined the ceramic classes, participated in lectio divina sessions, played board games, visited the bed-ridden sisters’ in their rooms, and prayerfully accompanied dying sisters, sitting long hours with them. A people person, where others gathered, Angie assembled with them...”*

*“Friendship and generosity rated high in her hierarchy of values. A faithful friend, friend forever, a giving and generous sister! Her generosity scaled beyond personal friends; you could count on her to give generously when a need surfaced...”*

*“What was the underlying force of Sister Angelina’s life? Prayer! Prayer is the soil where grace and goodness grows. This impelled her to meet life’s challenges, especially in her last years... Until her last week, enduring great weakness, she made every effort to participate in the prayer life of the sisters. Her waning spirit became obvious when she didn’t appear in Trinity Chapel her last week. A strong, simple faith, a humble life of prayer, blended with great devotion to the Trinity, Divine Mercy and Our Lady prepared her for a holy death...”*

No doubt Sister Angelina was greeted with the Father’s loving embrace and welcomed to His Kingdom. This is truly the day the Lord has made! Let us celebrate Sister Angelina with Easter joy and together sing the Easter Alleluia!