



## Born to New Life

### Sister Elvira Di Cerbo, MPF



Sister Elvira Di Cerbo, MPF, died peacefully at the age of 94 on March 2, 2022, in St. Joseph Hall Infirmary, Villa Walsh, Morristown, New Jersey.

Born and raised in Schenectady, New York, on December 22, 1927, Sister Elvira entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1946. She received the habit in 1947 and made her religious profession in 1950. Sister Elvira studied Art, earning both a BA and a MFA from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., from which she graduated summa cum laude.

In her 74 years of religious life, Sister Elvira served as a classroom teacher at both the elementary and high school levels in the following (arch)dioceses: Camden, Hartford, New York, Scranton, and Trenton. Sister Elvira ministered for 49 years in the Diocese of Camden: four years teaching Art at St. Joseph High School in Hammonton before being assigned to Paul VI High School in Haddonfield, where she served as a dedicated and passionate art teacher for 45 years. In 2003, the Diocese of Camden recognized her excellence in ministering to the Church in South Jersey and awarded her the Bishop's Medal for meritorious service. In 2011, Sister Elvira retired to Villa Walsh. Due to failing health, Sister Elvira took up residence in St. Joseph Hall in 2017.

Sister Ascenza Tizzano, General Superior, in her letter of sympathy to the Sisters of the Province shared, *"Sister Elvira gave of herself as long as she was able, especially at Paul VI, a mission that was very difficult for her to relinquish. ... In the Province, Sister Elvira will always be defined for her sublime works of art and for sharing with gift of art wherever she was missioned, including Villa Walsh where she spent some of her summers teaching art to the young Sisters. ... With enthusiasm and interest, she readily shared her world of Art. The artwork that remains behind will continue to reveal not only her talent for art but also reflects her great love and devotion for our Blessed Mother whom she captured so vividly on canvas and also the skill of her wood carving of Mary still displayed in the mansion."*

In her tribute, Sister Marianne McCann, who lived with Sister Elvira for many years at Paul VI shared this recent experience, *"I saw one of Sister Elvira's former students who expressed his condolences to me and then of course reminisced about her. From an alumnus of the Class of 1981 he had such vivid memories of her classes and her art lessons, and her high standards."* Sister Marianne continued, *"I still am amazed when I pass all of the artwork hanging in Paul VI and how she was able to get them to use their talents to such a high degree. The legacy she left us through her art students is immense and inspirational."*

The Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli, Bishop Emeritus of Paterson, in his homily noted, *"Sister Elvira's artistic talent, so generously shared, helped other behold the beauty of Creation, which St. John Damascene called 'the living icon of the face of God' and their own beauty as made in the image of God. Her unselfish readiness to help others in any way she could made charity real and accessible. But, most of all, it was her faith in Jesus, her deep love of our Blessed Mother, her devotion to God the Father and her joy that communicated to others in an unmistakable way that beyond this vale of tears lies heaven and the company of the saints to which she has been called."*

The Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Elvira was held in Saint Lucy Chapel at Villa Walsh on Tuesday, March 8, 2022. Her body was laid to rest in Ave Maria Cemetery at Villa Walsh.