



Born to New Life

Sister Mary Ann Gecina, MPF



Sister Mary Ann Gecina, MPF, died peacefully on the morning of Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24, 2024, at St. Joseph Hall, Villa Walsh, Morristown, New Jersey. She was 84 years of age.

Sister Mary Ann was born in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, on July 22, 1940, to a loving family. Educated by the Religious Teachers Filippini at Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary School and Church in Ellwood City, Sister Mary Ann entered our Community in 1958. She received the habit in 1959, and made her Perpetual Oblation in 1962. Sister Mary Ann earned a BS degree in Secondary Education from St. Joseph University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and a MS degree in Chemistry from University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In her 65 years of religious life, Sister Mary Ann was not one who sought the spotlight, yet she generously shared her gifts and talents wherever she was missioned. Her love of nature and the outdoors was indicative of her creative and inquisitive disposition. She faithfully ministered as a dynamic classroom teacher in the (arch)dioceses of Camden, Metuchen, Newark, Providence, and Trenton. She served as local convent Superior, and accepted roles as varied as teacher of advanced placement chemistry, chorus teacher, chair of the music department, producer of annual school musicals, and athletic director at Paul VI High School in Haddonfield New Jersey, and also used her combined skills as Principal of Villa Victoria Academy Upper School in Trenton, New Jersey, for 14 years.

The Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Paterson, offered a Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Mary Ann at St. Lucy Chapel, Villa Walsh on Saturday, December 28, 2024. The Most Reverend James F. Checchio, Bishop of Metuchen, with four additional priests, concelebrated a beautiful Eucharistic Liturgy. Sister Mary Ann's remains were then laid to rest in Ave Maria Cemetery at Villa Walsh.

Sister Ascenza Tizzano, General Superior, in her letter of sympathy to the Sisters of the Province wrote, "*Sister Mary Ann had numerous talents that she shared freely and that added to the richness of the spirit of the Community and the people she served, especially the youth. Blessed with diverse talents, she shared these gifts generously, joyfully, professionally, and at the same time modestly. The school plays she directed, her excitement and skill in the field of sports, her flair at the piano, and her love to teach and to explore, each were significant in her interactions with others and in bringing life in a variety of ways to our mission. Although her accomplishments were extraordinary, she presented herself so simply and in a soft-spoken casual manner. A smile always appeared engrained in her facial expression. Today she presents her wrapped gifts to the Newborn King with a heart filled with love and gratitude for all she has received and also all she endured.*"

In her tribute, Sister Marianne McCann, who worked closely with Sister Mary Ann for many years, especially at Paul VI High School observed, "*Without being able to rely on a huge, flamboyant personality, Sister Mary Ann always amazed me with her ability to make friends and really care for people...even people she did not know well. One afternoon, the doorbell rang, and Sister Mary Ann answered it. The next thing I know, I am standing in the kitchen with a small, yapping dog. This was followed by Sister Mary Ann getting a glass of water for the elderly dog owner and telling me that she had to drive this man and his dog home. In a matter of a minute, she gave of herself. For the 25th anniversary of her Investiture, Sister Mary Ann gave friends a remembrance of a small, framed quote by Dag Hammarskjold that inspired her. It read, 'If only I may grow: firmer, simpler, quieter, warmer.' We here today are witnesses to her living just that way. We pray and mourn for Sister Mary Ann who is now mercifully freed from her pain and suffering. May the angels lead our dear Sister and friend home to eternal peace.*"