



Born to New Life

Sister Josephine Calo, MPF



Sister Josephine Calo, MPF, 84, died as she lived, peacefully, on Friday, March 10, 2017, at Saint Joseph Hall. The sisters lovingly surrounded her bed in prayer during her final days.

Rev. Jeffrey Lee, her Pastor while at Our Lady of the Angels (Saint Joachim), Trenton, celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Father Jeffrey recalled her special traits that made her the person everyone loved; she was gentle and permeated a Christian joy; she knew who she was. Her life, he noted, transformed people. When people questioned God, she helped them find the bridge. Over and over again, she saw opportunities to build bridges. She believed that when people cannot come to church, then we need to bring the church to them. Sister Josephine showed people God's love and mercy, and they responded to this. Sister Josephine recounted that she re-discovered her call to be a Filippini Sister at Saint Joachim because of the love the people still held for our first five sisters. *"I want to give back to these sisters."* Father Jeffrey concluded by affirming that her life came full circle. Where she was shaped, she gave back. She let the seeds of God's grace take birth and led by example.

Born and raised in Waterbury, Connecticut, Sister Josephine entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in February 1953, and was invested in August of that same year. She was finally professed in 1956.

Sister Josephine was awarded a Bachelor of Science Degree with a major in elementary education from Saint Joseph University, Philadelphia, and in her later years she was certified as a hospital chaplain. She taught at the elementary level in the Archdioceses of Newark and Hartford and in the Dioceses of Camden, Metuchen, and Pittsburgh.

In addition to teaching, Sister Josephine held other roles: principal and superior, Saint Joseph, Lodi, NJ; superior at Holy Family, Nutley, New Jersey, Saint Joseph by the Sea, South Mantoloking, New Jersey, Villa Victoria, Trenton, New Jersey; hospital chaplain at Saint Joseph, Toms River, New Jersey; pastoral minister at Saint Cecelia Parish, Iselin, New Jersey, Our Lady of the Angels (Saint Joachim) Trenton, New Jersey, and Saint Joseph Hall, Villa Walsh. In 2012, Sister Josephine became a resident at Saint Joseph Hall Infirmary.

In every place of mission and in every role, Sister Josephine was loved by both children and adults; she was placid, kind, compassionate and caring. These distinct qualities benefitted her ministry to the sick and dying.

Sister Dolores Bianchi, the head of Our Lady of Sorrows Group, gave Sister Josephine a fine tribute at the conclusion of Mass. These are some thoughts that Sister Dolores shared in her eulogy.

... Sister Josephine was a genuine religious. She was an example of what love is, in somewhat of a quiet and simple way. She showed love by her way of life: ability, talents and spiritual gifts amount to nothing if we don't love each other. Without selfless love we have nothing.

Sister Josephine always helped where she was able, especially assisting the elderly and those who were grieving. It didn't matter who you were. She had great empathy and served well beyond the duties expected of her.

She always showed patience and kindness, even when wronged. Sister Josephine walked many families through their good-byes and grieving. Her gifts of compassion, understanding, kindness and mercy were what she taught others – but lived them first... During her long illness she suffered much, but her peace was evident. She lived the virtues of faith, hope, and love.

So saying good-bye to Sister Josephine is a blessing of love proclaiming the belief that Sister Josephine is with God, and she will never be alone. So today we say, *"Go with God, dear friend. Be at peace, never forgetting that we will always love you. Your spirit is free, your sorrows gone, and your burdens lifted. Today you dwell in the house of God forever. May you rest in peace."*