



Born to New Life

Sister Mary De Bacco, MPF



Sister Mary De Bacco, MPF, 86, entered eternal life on February 7, 2019, at Saint Joseph Hall. Born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, Sister Mary entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1952. She received her habit in 1953, and made her religious profession in 1956.

Sister Mary was awarded a BS degree in History and Italian, MS in Business Education from Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania; Certification in Pastoral Counseling, Seton Hall University; MS from Fordham University in Franciscan Spirituality. Sister Mary taught in the middle school in the Archdiocese of Newark and in the Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey. She taught History, Italian and English at Villa Victoria and Villa Wash Academy, and was pastoral minister at the Morris County Correctional Facility.

Sister Mary held many administrative roles in the Province of Saint Lucy. She served as local superior, Formator, Provincial Secretary, Provincial Councilor, Provincial Treasurer, and Provincial Superior. Assignments in Rome included General Councilor for six years and General Superior of the Institute for twelve years. Her accomplishments were many, not only in the United States, but globally. She reached out and helped improve the lives of women and children in the countries of Albania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, India and Brazil where the Filippini Sisters serve.

Sister Mary returned to the United States in 2007 accepting the role of Archivist and also Mission Director for the Province of Saint Lucy. She volunteered at the Morristown Correctional Facility in pastoral care. In 2014 after a fall, Sister Mary became a resident at Saint Joseph Hall and remained there until her passing.

Sister Mary was a committed woman esteemed and loved by all who knew her. Although soft spoken and gentle, the strength of her convictions were clear and steadfast. These are the qualities that exemplified her as a credible and well respected leader and religious woman.

Archbishop Cronin, from the Archdiocese of Hartford, celebrant for the liturgy, stated how appropriate that Sister Mary's funeral Mass coincided with the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. He explained the ways that Sister Mary fully understood the call of her Baptism, and she knew that *"Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life."* He expounded on sections from her obituary and spoke warmly of his visits with her in Rome and the warm reception he always received. He concluded by speaking of her last years in Saint Joseph Hall where she resumed her life of prayer, especially the rosary. The Archbishop warmly ended with this beautiful image of her: *"Mary was her name, Mary was her model, and Mary was her inspiration."*

With genuine affection and heaviness of heart, Sister Mary Beth Lloyd delivered a genuine tribute in honor of Sister Mary. She spoke of Sister Mary's family background: loving, quiet, humble, generous Christians; proud of their Italian heritage and proud to have come from Newark. Sister Mary Beth recalled the steps that led up to her entrance: her Catholic education at Saint Francis Xavier School; her success at Central High School where her work ethic, penmanship, caring ways and leadership were acknowledged; her position as a legal secretary; her encounters with Sister Margherita Marchione at daily Mass. This led to her entrance day at Villa Walsh.

Sister Mary Beth recounted the positions Sister Mary held in the Institute. *(Mentioned above)* *"I don't know if there was any other Maestra who held every position in the Institute!"* She further gave examples portraying Sister Mary as a real person: her favorite songs, movies, authors, etc.

"Now that is a very nice resume, but what good did she really do?" Sister Mary Beth asked.

"These past days many people have come up to me or phoned me. They told me of some kind and generous deed done by Sister Mary that helped them or one of their family members make their faith stronger, saved their marriage, fed their children. Her smile, that unconditional love, her wisdom drew so many to her. It's what drew little children to jump in her lap, or adults to sit by her side and tell her all their sorrows. And she didn't always have all the answers but all left with peace, knowing she would pray for them."

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Sister Mary Beth related that Sister Mary helped so many people throughout the world. She shared three moving stories, one that took place in Brazil , one in Sassi, Ethiopia, and one in India.

“...We could continue with endless stories of a life of continuous giving and loving others. Let me stop here but you continue with your own stories of her goodness.

“Her strength and courage came from her constant working with herself, her deep spirit of prayer, her love and devotion to the Blessed Mother and Saint Lucy Filippini and using her authority always for the good of others. She was esteemed by popes and lepers, and all here, all loved her so.

“The Letter of Peter of says...

‘What we await are new heavens and a new earth where, according to his promise, the justice of God will reside.’ 2 Peter 3:13

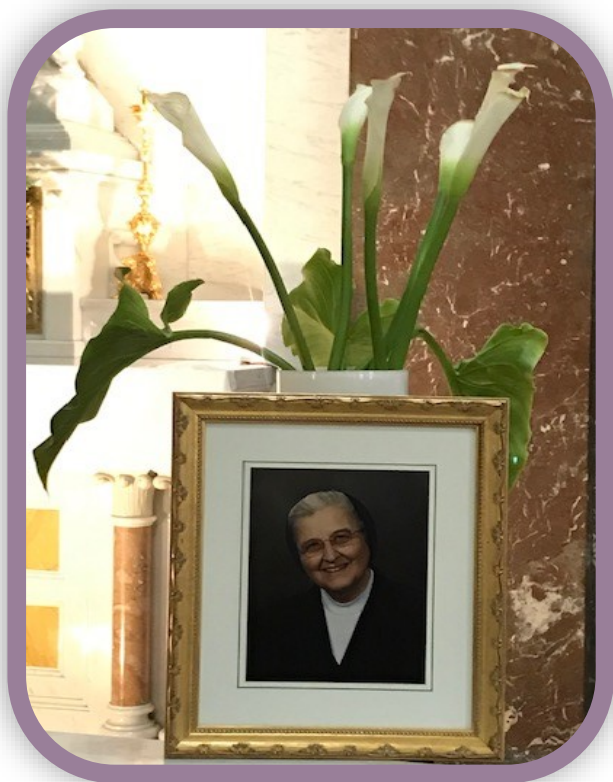
“Let me end in Sister Mary’s own words:

‘We are so grateful for today’s outpouring of love, let each of us place the gift of ourselves on your altar, dearest Lord. It was You who gave us life, it was You who called us to Yourself. And like Lucy, had we a thousand lives, our choice would always be the same. There could be none other, there would be no other way.

And with our hearts overflowing with gratitude, we make our own this beautiful prayer: For all that has been, ‘Thanks,’ for all that will be ‘Yes!’ Amen.’ ”



A memorial Mass was celebrated for Sister Mary De Bacco on Saturday, February 23, 2019, together with the sisters of the Province. Monsignor John Hart, celebrant of the Mass, was privileged to be a part of this tribute and shared his own heartwarming impressions of Sister Mary. Sister Mary Beth offered the tribute once again, this time she directed it more specifically to the sisters and altered her moving stories. What joy for the Province to honor Sister Mary De Bacco, former General Superior from the United States of America!



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And with our hearts overflowing with gratitude, we make our own this beautiful prayer: ‘For all that has been, ‘Thanks,’ for all that will be ‘Yes!’ Amen.’”

Words taken from a discourse given by Sister Mary in 2005.