



Born to New Life

Sister Antoinette Iorio, MPF



“My Lord Jesus Christ has espoused me with his ring, he has crowned me like a bride.”

Antiphon from the Divine Office - Day of Sister Antoinette's funeral

Sister Antoinette Iorio, MPF, 97, died peacefully Wednesday morning, January 16, 2019, at Saint Joseph Hall. She was surrounded by the sisters who accompanied her in prayer during her last days. Father Ron Sordillo, celebrant and homilist at her Mass, stated in his opening statement *“Peace is God's gift to us, given in Christ.”* It is this gift of peace and grace that Sister Antoinette received throughout her last journey.

Sister Antoinette was born in Corning and raised in New York City. She entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1937 and received her habit in 1939. Her final religious profession was in 1942.

Sister Antoinette was awarded a BS degree in Elementary Education from Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. Throughout her teaching profession, Sister Antoinette taught grades three to five in the Archdioceses of Newark and New York and in the Dioceses of Trenton and Camden, New Jersey. When she was no longer involved in teaching, she assisted as a school librarian and later as an administrative assistant. Sister Antoinette also served as local superior at Saint James in Trenton, New Jersey.

Sister Antoinette returned to Villa Walsh in 1997. One of her main responsibilities was the Villa Gift Shop. However, she assisted in many other areas of service. She especially attended to multiple household responsibilities because of her efficiency. Her greatest ambition was to remain active and helpful wherever needed. In January 2017, when no longer able to move about independently, she became a resident at Saint Joseph Hall. Even while at Saint Joseph Hall she extended herself from her bedroom and was given little chores to keep occupied.

Sister Ascenza, the recipient of many of Sister Antoinette's good works, prepared words of tribute in gratitude for all the many ways Sister Antoinette shared her gifts.

“Today we gather to honor Sister Antoinette and to thank God for her long life of ninety-seven years. With heartfelt gratitude to God who has blessed her, not only with long life, but with eighty years of consecrated life as a Religious Teacher Filippini, we praise God for his fidelity to Sister Antoinette and for her returned response of faithfulness. How fortunate for her, that most of these years were lived in active service!”

“In 1997, retired from the classroom, Sister Antoinette already gained a reputation of being a very responsible, helpful, handy person, someone who not only gets the job done, but completes it in an orderly manner, meticulous with every detail. Sister Frances Lauretti, provincial at the time, knew Villa Walsh needed this kind of person and so began Sister Antoinette's twenty-one years of service on these grounds.”

Sister Ascenza elaborated on the following points that would be very familiar to anyone who really knew Sister Antoinette: Sister Antoinette was a New Yorker! ... Sister Antoinette passed Regents... Sister Antoinette was the Villa's Rummikub Queen... Sister Antoinette loved to be needed and loved to be loved... She functioned best under these conditions. If Sister Antoinette was your friend, you could be sure of her loyalty, generosity, and fidelity... Sister loved serving in the Villa Gift Shop... If a job was tedious, demanded time, and required patience, you could call on Sister Antoinette to get it done... Sister Antoinette never wanted to be idle... Sister Antoinette had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus... *“This listing that illustrates the person of Sister Antoinette, is much longer, but the lesson is already clear. It is the small acts of kindness and helpfulness that hold true value; they make the difference in one's life and in the lives of those they encounter every day...”*

The last words Sister Antoinette had the ability to form, were *“thank you.”* Sister Ascenza concluded with the certainty that these were probably the same words she uttered when she faced Jesus for the first time. *“Thank you, Lord Jesus! Thank you for loving me these ninety-seven years and for eighty years of serving you when serving others. Thank you for the peace of my last journey and thank you for bringing me home safely. Yes, Lord, I thank you!”*