



## Born to New Life

### Sister Mary Palance, MPF

Sister Mary Palance, MPF, died in the early morning on Wednesday, November 15, 2017, at Saint Joseph Hall, Villa Walsh, Morristown, New Jersey, after a brief illness at the age of ninety-five.



Born and raised in Bristol, Connecticut, Sister Mary was one of eleven siblings. She entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1939, received her habit in 1940, and made her religious profession in 1943. She was a member of the community she revered for seventy-seven years.

Sister Mary was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the College of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, New Jersey, and held a Master of Arts in Elementary Education and Administration from Rhode Island College, Providence, Rhode Island.

Sister Mary served as teacher and also principal in the following archdioceses: Newark, New Jersey, New York, New York, Hartford, Connecticut, and in the Dioceses of Camden, Trenton, New Jersey; Cleveland, Ohio; and Providence, Rhode Island. In addition, Sister Mary was asked to assume many administrative positions in the Institute: assistant directress for novices; provincial superior, Queen of Apostles Province, Bristol, Connecticut.; provincial councilor for two terms; general councilor for the Institute at the Generalate level in Rome. Sister Mary became director of Archbishop Cronin's Residence in West Hartford, Connecticut, and remained there until 2015 when she retired to Saint Joseph Hall.

Sister Mary's greatest asset was her willingness to serve in any capacity that fulfilled the mission of the community. The legacy she leaves behind is her spirit of joy, generosity and service.

The celebrant and homilist for her Mass of Christian Burial was the Most Rev. Daniel Cronin, Archbishop Emeritus of Hartford, Connecticut. Archbishop Cronin held a deep affection and appreciation for Sister Mary's dedicated service at his residence. His eloquent homily was both informative and sentimental. The Archbishop highly praised Sister Mary for the many roles she held during her religious life with such deep dedication.

*"...She was a teacher, very well trained and credentialed, but also a proud member of the community... Over the course of her teaching career, she had enormous influence on hundreds of young people who sat in front of her to learn from her and especially to learn about God.... Highlighting Sister Mary's teaching career does not lessen at all the profound appreciation of the many contributions she made in various leadership roles. She was an able and astute leader in her positions of leadership..."*

From a nostalgic stance, the Archbishop shared, *"I recall the days, for almost twenty years, Sister Mary and Sister Anna Grace were the angels that made the Archbishop's residence run smoothly as they created a wholesome and religious environment which contributed greatly to the ease and success of my work as Archbishop... Monsignor Ginty and I will never cease to be grateful."*

Sister Ella Mae MacDonald, a companion to Sister Mary through the years, prepared the eulogy but was unable to be present. Sister Elaine Bebyn spoke in Sister Ella Mae's name. Unfolding Sister Mary's characteristics, she recounted:

*"Sister Mary was humble, confident, unafraid, willing to take risks and to forge ahead for the good of community. In a nutshell, you can say she was a true Religious Teacher Filippini."*

She went on to qualify these words by comparing Sister Mary's life with that of Saint Lucy. She spoke of Sister Mary's devotion to Our Blessed Mother, her care for every sister in need, obedience to her superiors even when it was difficult. Similar to Saint Lucy, she was a leader in many facets of her religious life and was prepared to meet the challenges the day would bring. As a superior, she exercised her authority in a spirit of service and never asked the sisters to do something she wouldn't do. During her years as the provincial superior, she was a spiritual leader, exacting, and genuine. It was obvious she had the sisters at heart. Sister Ella Mae concluded that from the day Sister Mary embraced religious life, she never turned back. Well done, Sister Mary! Receive the reward God has prepared for you. Rest in peace.