



Born to New Life

Sister Pietrina Mazzola, MPF



The Filippini Community mourns the passing of Sister Pietrina Mazzola, who died a beautiful death early on the morning of November 25, 2018, at Saint Joseph Hall. Father Ron Sordillo, celebrant at her Mass of Resurrection, reminded the assembly: *“God rewards those who earnestly seek Him, so we need to keep knocking. We can’t give up. We need to seek God with all our hearts.”* What a perfect opening for honoring Sister Pietrina who did just this!

Sister Pietrina entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1937. She received her habit in 1938, and made her religious profession in 1941. Sister Pietrina was awarded a BS degree in Biology from Fordham University and an MA in Administration from Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut. Sister Pietrina taught in the Elementary, Jr. High and High School levels in the Archdioceses of Newark and New York and in the Dioceses of Trenton and Camden, New Jersey.

From 1960 until September 2018, Sister Pietrina served in Connecticut. During much of this time, she held roles of principal and superior. She was also elected Provincial Councilor for two six year terms for Queen of Apostles Province. In 2004, Sister Pietrina received the Pro Ecclesia Award from Bishop Lori, Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut, at the time. This significant recognition crowned her years of school ministry.

Although Sister Pietrina retired in 2009, she continued to volunteer her time at Saint Peter, Torrington, Connecticut, and then the Montessori School at Queen of Apostles, Bristol, Connecticut. Sister Pietrina became a resident at Saint Joseph Hall two months prior to her passing.

In the words of tribute shared by Sister Ascenza, she emphasized that the sisters who knew and lived with Sister Pietrina admired her good works and religious witness, and she also spoke of her fidelity to all that the community embodies and her positive spirit while at Saint Joseph Hall. Here are excerpts from her eulogy:

“Many of the sisters have been recipients of the kindnesses and goodness Sister Pietrina offered within the community. The sisters gratefully recall the royal treatment given to their families when they visited the convent. The sisters have identified her as Master Teacher, Woman of Service, Servant Sister, Kindness Personified.

“A faithful and loyal daughter of Saint Lucy, Sister Pietrina fostered devotion to our Founders and encouraged and promoted community traditions. Her presence at community events confirmed that she wanted to be and to do whatever the community expected of her. Age 96, and the long distance from Connecticut to Villa Walsh, did not hinder her participation.

“During these eighty years of mission, volumes could be written of all the good sister accomplished: the lives she changed, the hearts she touched, the minds she unlocked, the poor she clothed, the service she rendered, the prayers she prayed. What a melody of love!

“While at Saint Joseph Hall, she made every effort to attend Mass, meals, and any and all activities that were scheduled there. With oxygen and wheelchair, she even attended the Provincial Chapter! A smile became her common and kind facial expression, and “I am doing great.” her usual response. Gratitude just filled her heart! When and while in her bedroom, she prided in praying several rosaries a day, a long time practice from childhood that kept her connected to Our Lady. The time in between, Sister enjoyed soft religious music and Melody Time songs. A peaceful, holy climate always filled her room. Throughout her weeks of illness, the melody she carried in her heart and on her lips sang words of gratitude for all the care and love she received.

“Sunday morning at 2:00 a.m. Sister Pietrina requested that the caregiver bring her to the chapel. No doubt she was offering her final melody of praise and her last act of total self-giving, “Here I am, Lord.” She returned to her room, and died in her sleep a few hours later. What a grace-filled death! We can only thank you, Sister Pietrina, for the beautiful melody of the love and life you leave behind.”