



Born to New Life

Sister Frances Stavalo, MPF



Sister Frances Stavalo, MPF, 84, died peacefully at Hackensack University Hospital on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, on the vigil of the 349th birthday of Saint Lucy Filippini.

Born in Jersey City, New Jersey, Sister Frances entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1951. She received the habit in 1952 and made her religious profession in 1955.

In her early years of ministry, Sister Frances taught elementary grades in various parish schools in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from St. Elizabeth College, Convent Station, New Jersey, and earned a Master of Arts degree in the same major from Central Connecticut State College, New Britain, Connecticut. Sister Frances kept a competitive edge on Catholic Education by attending national conventions and diocesan workshops. The highlight of her educational ministry was being selected by Cardinal James Hickey of Washington, DC, to begin a new educational endeavor in Darnestown, Maryland, the Mary of Nazareth School. The late Cardinal worked closely with her in founding the school in 1994, where Sister Frances served as principal for eight years. Having served as local superior in the congregation for over thirty years, Sister Frances was elected Provincial Superior of Queen of Apostles Province, Bristol, Connecticut, which necessitated her leaving the school in 2002. The president of the Home School Association upon her departure stated, *“I don’t know what I love about her more, her sense of humor or her ability to take control of any given situation with a loving hand.”* For her part, Sister Frances made it very clear, *“Children have always been my great love.”*

As a vibrant member of the congregation for 68 years, Sister Frances kept the foundation of her vocation no secret. *“My mother was my inspiration. She was a deeply religious woman, who instilled in me the spirit of goodness, and the beauty of the Blessed Mother. I loved going to church with her, standing next to her saying the rosary before I even knew what the rosary was.”*

A private burial service was held at Ave Maria Cemetery, Villa Walsh, Morristown, New Jersey, on Monday, January 18, 2021. Father Joseph Ferraro, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Nutley, New Jersey, presided at the Rite of Committal. He spoke well of Sister Frances’ acceptance of the long suffering she endured. Even in her own pain, she continued to focus on others. *“When I would call her to see how she was doing, she put herself aside and would ask me how I was as well as people in the parish.”* Sister Patricia Pompa, Provincial Superior, also spoke of the unending hope and courage Sister Frances maintained throughout her illness. May that hope now be fulfilled and may she rest in the eternal peace of heaven.