



## Born to New Life

### Sister Geraldine Canale, MPF



Sister Geraldine Canale, MPF, 92, passed away peacefully on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at St. Joseph Hall, Villa Walsh, Morristown, New Jersey.

Born in Watertown, New York, into a large and loving family, Sister Geraldine entered the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1949. She received the habit in 1950 and made her Perpetual Oblation in 1953. Sister Geraldine earned her B.S. in Elementary Education and her M.A. in Education from Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. In her 75 years of religious life, Sister Geraldine served as classroom teacher of the primary grades, special education, classroom aide, catechist, and parish pastoral minister. She faithfully served in the (arch)dioceses of Brooklyn, Camden, Newark, New York, Ogdensburg, Paterson, Scranton, and Trenton. In addition, Sister Geraldine was appointed local convent superior.

In the Diocese of Camden, Sister Geraldine was assigned to St. Joseph Parish and School in Hammonton, New Jersey, on three different occasions. She taught first-grade in the periods of 1964-1965 and 1978-1994. From 2004 to 2020, she generously served as parish pastoral minister. Due to declining health, Sister Geraldine returned to the motherhouse, Villa Walsh, in 2020, taking up residence in St. Joseph Hall, where she continued to bring life and joy to her fellow Sisters.

The Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Geraldine was held in Saint Lucy Chapel at Villa Walsh on Monday, November 24, 2025. Her mortal remains were interred in Ave Maria Cemetery at Villa Walsh. In his homily, the Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli, Bishop Emeritus of Paterson, remarked, *"At a young age of 16, Sister Geraldine chose to leave behind anything that could separate her from God by becoming a religious and living the evangelical counsels. For 75 years a Religious Teacher Filippini, she knew the closeness of God in her prayer and in her apostolic works. As a teacher, a catechist, a pastoral minister, as she brought others in eight dioceses close to God through her instruction and her example, she herself felt his presence in her life. And it was that presence of God that filled her with joy, a contagious joy that overflowed in her sense of humor and laughter. Those who knew her can never forget her kindness that brightened their days and all the good she did."*

Sister Ascenza Tizzano, General Superior, in her letter of sympathy to the Sisters of the Province noted: *"Sister Geraldine's many years teaching first grade opened another chapter of her life and the experiences she shared. Because of her involvement and success with little children, she was asked to further her studies and was sent for professional training at Saint Coletta's in Wisconsin to assist children with special needs. Through all of these experiences, she touched the lives of countless children with warmth and a joyful spirit. She could captivate an audience, small or large, when she shared these teaching experiences! Her storytelling was a natural gift. ... The second part of her ministerial life, very different from her early years in the classroom, was dedicated to reaching out to the homebound and the elderly. Sister Geraldine joyfully visited them, gathering gifts for them, especially during the festive seasons of the year, running errands, and attending to the practical needs that eased their daily burdens. Free-spirited by nature, ... Sister Geraldine found deep satisfaction each day knowing she had made a meaningful difference in the lives of the sick and the elderly. Ever attentive to their spiritual well-being, she faithfully notified the parish priest when someone was nearing the end of life, ensuring they received the sacraments. After their passing, she continued to accompany the families, assisting with preparations for the Mass of Christian Burial and being present with them on the day of the funeral. This ministry, offered with compassion and devotion, brought Sister Geraldine the fulfillment she sought at this time in her life. ... We can take comfort in believing that Our Lady, who received such devoted love from Sister Geraldine, was very near to her at the moment of her passing. ... May heaven now, too, rejoice in her cheerful presence, and may she rest in the lasting peace she sought throughout her years of faithful service."*