



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
*Atlantic-Midwest Communications*  
410-377-7774 Ext.1240  
[am-communications@amssnd.org](mailto:am-communications@amssnd.org).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sister Mary Serafine Della Croce, SSND**

August 24, 1932 – February 2, 2018



WILTON, Conn. - Sister Mary Serafine Della Croce, SSND, died peacefully on February 2, 2018 at Norwalk Hospital surrounded by her sisters who kept vigil with her in her final days. She was a vowed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame for 65 years and an educator and administrator at schools in New York and New Jersey for 53 years.

Antoinette was born on August 24, 1932 to Serafina Alvano and Louis Della Croce. She was the first of five children. Two years later, her brother, Louis, was born, followed by Salvadore, Anthony, and Michael. In her biography she wrote, “Both my parents were from large families, so I had plenty of playmates.”

Antoinette entered public school kindergarten at the age of four. The following she year attended the Nativity of the Blessed Mary School taught by the Ursuline sisters from kindergarten through the fourth grade. In the fifth grade, Antoinette entered St. Rita School in Brooklyn taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She became very interested religious life following a visit to Fort Lee, N.J. where she met Juniorate girls. In her autobiography she explained, “I entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame because I was inspired and impressed by the sisters who taught me, and because I always wanted to be a teacher. My years at the Juniorate were very happy and passed quickly.”

On August 28, 1950, 56 candidates entered the motherhouse in Baltimore. In September 1950, Antoinett was sent to teach fourth grade at St. Leo School in Baltimore. She

remained there for a year and a half and completed the year by going to Frostburg, Maryland. Antoinette entered the novitiate and received the name Serafine on July 16, 1952. She was so happy with the choice of her name because it was her mother's.

Following her religious profession, on July 24, 1953, Sister Serafine was sent to teach the sixth grade at Mt. Carmel in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., from 1953 to 1956. This was followed by seven years teaching at St. Joseph School in Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y.(1956 to 1963) and eight years at St. Anthony of Padua, Ozone Park, N.Y. From 1971-1980, Serafine served as principal of St. Anselm School in Brooklyn and from 1980 to 1984 as principal of St. Saviour in Brooklyn.

Subsequent to a sabbatical/renewal year from 1984-1985, Sister Serafine taught at St. John the Evangelist in Leonia, N.J. from 1985-1987. She then served as principal of St. Matthias, Queens, N.Y. from 1987-2000 and director of the Child Development Center at Wilton from 2000-2002. For four years, she taught small classes in math and reading at St. Catherine School in Trumbull.

In 2013, Sister Serafine moved to Villa Notre Dame where she enriched community life by proving herself a good listener and an enthusiastic participant in community activities. Sister Serafine also enjoyed visits to and from her family and recently celebrated her 85th birthday with a large family gathering.

Her wake, held at Villa Notre Dame on February 5, was attended by many family members, community members and friends. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the Villa chapel on February 6, followed by her burial at St. Mary Cemetery, Bethel.

Serafine was predeceased by her brother, Louis of Springfield, Mass. She is mourned by her brothers: Anthony of Bethpage, N.Y.; Salvatore of Staten Island, N.Y.; and Michael of Bayside, N.Y., their wives, families, and friends, and by the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

One of the Burial Mass intentions was: In thanksgiving for Serafine's life as an educator, for her loving compassion to the teachers, students, and parents to whom she ministered. This was further evidenced by these words of a former student: "Sister Serafine was my eighth grade teacher at St. Anthony of Padua School in South Ozone Park in 1970-71. She was an excellent teacher, compassionate and fair! I had a great experience with her

and my thoughts have and always will be with her. May she rest in peace with the eternal knowledge that she lived a beautiful, productive, loving life. God just received another angel.”

Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Atlantic Midwest Province, c/o Development Office, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn. 06897 or online: [www.amssnd.org](http://www.amssnd.org)