

Sister Eleanor Zampese, SC

Entered eternal life on November 27, 2020



My thanks to everyone for coming today to celebrate my sister Eleanor's life, to honor her memory and to pray for her soul.

My special thanks to the Sisters of Charity for your love and support of Eleanor through her 57 years in community with you, but most especially for this past month which has been one of great uncertainty, many surprises and difficult decisions for you. Sisters of St. Joseph Convent in Paterson where she resided. You gave Ele the blessings of community, prayer and support and welcomed me into your home often, but regularly on Sundays for dinner with Eleanor. Sister Judy Mertz, Ele's community Counselor, for your untiring outreach and support, constant communication, sensitivity and attention to detail. You have made this sad journey more bearable.

And to my own community, the Religious Teachers Filippini, Sr. Patricia, Provincial Superior, Sr. Betty Jean, Sr. Laura, Counselors and all the Sisters at Villa Walsh for your Sisterly concern and prayerful support for me and Eleanor. I am truly grateful.

Eleanor was born at home in Clifton, NJ, on Dec. 3, 1934, delivered by a mid-wife who was late in arriving and so Ele decided to be born without her. She also had the distinction of being one of very few people born in the city of Clifton. (Clifton had no hospital, most babies were born in Passaic or Paterson.)

She was the oldest of three surviving children born to Anthony and Norma (Lammori) Zampese. Six years later she was joined by a sister, yours truly, and two years later a brother, Norman, of happy memory. Being the oldest she was often left in charge of me and my brother and she took this responsibility seriously and needless to say she made sure we were always "Angels" under her watch!

By the time she graduated high school, she knew exactly what she wanted to do and that was to obtain a degree of Medical Technology. Imagine Norma and Tony's surprise, but they agreed. When Grand Mom, aunts and uncles heard, my parents were reminded that the women in the family got married, had children and raised a family. Needless to say, my parents (mostly Mom) decided Eleanor would have the opportunity to earn a BS degree in Medical Technology from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Eleanor worked weekends and many evenings to help with expenses. Some years later while in community, she earned her MS degree in Biology/Mycology from LI University.

Her first position in the lab of Paterson General Hospital was not a good experience. She left and was hired by a Sister of Charity, Marian Immaculate at St. Mary's Hospital in Passaic.

During this time God had planted the seed of a religious vocation in Eleanor. The only community she knew well was the Filippini Sisters who staffed Sacred Heart School in our Parish. An appointment with the Provincial Superior resulted in Eleanor deciding she definitely did not want to teach and so abandoned the idea of joining the Filippini community. Sometime later, she met with the Sisters of Charity, was assured she would not have to teach but could pursue her profession, and was accepted into the community in 1963 and she never looked back.

One thing I learned from Eleanor is a dedication to be the best you can be – whatever you do. Ele's work ethic was one of giving her best at all times, evaluating and pushing for improvements that would give better answers and results for the patients.

She served as Medical Technologist at All Souls Hospital, Morristown and St. Joseph Hospital, Paterson; a Microbiologist at Roche Clinical Lab, Raritan; several posts at St Mary's Hospital Passaic including Hospital Admin. - VP of Mission Services, Pastoral Care and Volunteer at both St. Mary's and St. Joseph's.

Eleanor was one of the most private people on earth and I know that many of you would agree, but she also enjoyed celebrations, being among people, her family, fellow Sisters, and her friends among whom are Bishop Arthur Serratelli and Fr. Joe Garbarino, Sr. Alice Sullivan of happy memory and so many others. She also enjoyed traveling the world, learning of and from the people and their customs.

When she wasn't well, she tried her best not show it and definitely did not want any attention. This is what made it difficult, knowing she was sick and not being able to help.

This is one of my all-time favorite memories of Ele. Growing up we shared a bedroom with twin beds. Many nights we would just talk about anything...events of the day, problems, or just trivia. We would talk until we heard my mother from downstairs tell us to "go to sleep!"

Our world is left poorer by Ele's death, but during life she touched each one of us and left us with treasured memories. Enjoy the memories!

God bless you and again, Thank you!

Lois Zampese
Sister Eleanor's sister