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O B I T U A R Y

**Sister Jennie Palma, OP**

(S. Marie Flores)

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On October 2, 2023, the Feast of the Angels, our loving God and all his angels called our Sister Jennie Palma to heaven's eternal joys. Sr. Jennie was 96 years old and had been a Sister of St. Dominic of Amityville for 76 years.

On March 3, 1927, Jennie Mary Palma was born in Brooklyn, New York (NY) to Joseph and Mary (Argento) Palma. Though short in stature, she became the big sister of five siblings - Josephine, Fred, Louis, Anna, and Joseph. The Palma family moved to Jamaica, NY to be closer to their widowed grandfather and help with his large Italian garden. In St. Pius V Parish, Jennie met the Dominican Sisters who taught in the parish school. When Jennie graduated from John Adams High School, she worked in the business world for two years.

On September 8, 1947, Jennie entered the Novitiate of the Dominican Sisters of Amityville, and on August 4, 1948, she received the habit and her religious name, Sr. Marie Flores. Jennie professed her First Vows on August 6, 1949, and her Final Vows on August 7, 1952.

Jennie received a Bachelor of Arts from St. John's University and a Master of Arts in Languages from Middlebury College in Vermont. Jennie was a linguist, who could speak fluently in Italian, Spanish and French, languages she taught on the secondary level and as an adjunct professor for five years at C. W. Post College in Brookville, NY.



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“He did good and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” - Acts 14:17

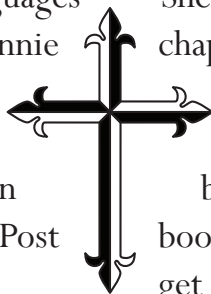
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Jennie began her long ministry as an educator in 1949 in Brooklyn at St. Frances De Chantal School. She then moved on to St. Bartholomew School in Queens and Holy Redeemer School in Freeport. From 1965 to 1989, she taught Spanish and French at All Saints High School in Brooklyn, St. Agnes High School in College Point, and Queen of the Rosary Academy in Amityville.

After forty years as a dedicated classroom teacher, Jennie's ministry moved into a special itinerancy and created memories with others which have become so dear. At the mention of her name, the response is usually, “Oh Sr. Jennie, she'd do anything you'd ask of her.” Or “Oh Sr. Jennie, the first things you saw from her was a smile.”

From 1989 forward Jennie took up ministry where it was needed: a substitute teacher, an office clerical worker, a teacher's aide. Jennie had a kind and humble serving heart. She made many friends just in getting from one ministry to another since Jennie never learned to drive! Her preaching continued often with those who were happily driving her home.

She had a close friendship with Msgr. Adessa, chaplain at the Motherhouse for many years. If they were going out for supper, he was known to ask, “Where to first, Jennie?” because she invariably had errands to run, or books to return to a library before they would get to a restaurant.



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One of Jennie's special places of volunteering was at Dominican Village. She loved to come in to greet and chat with anyone she may meet. From these encounters came the forming of a Crocheting Club and a Knitting Club with Jennie using her gifts both in those arts and in conversations among the women.

Shortly after Jennie moved to Amityville, our literacy program, The OPening Word, opened a new site in the Motherhouse. Jennie immediately volunteered as a teacher, casually talking with the women and teaching them how to converse in this new country. She was so authentic herself and treated each woman with the respect and friendship which empowered them to learn and laugh and feel loved and welcomed.

Jennie took a special interest and care of two Middle Eastern women who had been rescued from trafficking and were being housed in the Motherhouse. She was certainly among their guardian angels in this frightening time.

Although she went back to her baptismal name, Jennie, it needs to be mentioned that her religious name, Marie Flores, was well bestowed. Jennie loved flowers and plants. She could be found around the Motherhouse grounds tidying up a small garden to its weedless beauty or encouraging vegetables to grow. She also told a resident at Dominican Village that she tended to and faithfully watered 63 (that's the number she gave) plants in the Motherhouse!

She always spoke about how grateful she was to have had the opportunity to travel to other countries with high school language clubs. A most

memorable trip, however, was in 1980 when she travelled to Italy with her mother and father. They went back to their home villages where her father and maternal grandparents had left to immigrate to America.

Jennie's legacy in many minds was her beautiful crocheted and knitted afghans, scarves, hats, mittens, and newborn baby sweater sets. Every new child in her family was gifted with one of these beautiful and treasured handmade layette sets "made especially for you by Aunt Jennie" as the label said.

Jennie loved her family and especially enjoyed being with all the young children, visits that always made them feel special. They remember that she played games with them and taught them new projects. Holidays were a special time, especially for the traditional Italian foods. She was an able kitchen assistant to her mother and her aunts. Jennie loved to cook as much as she loved to eat!

Sister Jennie is now among the holy ones and angels. She was welcomed by her parents and, her brothers Fred and Louis. She is survived by her sisters Anna Paolini and Josephine Doria, and her brother Joseph and their families which include 18 nieces and nephews and countless grandnieces and grandnephews.

The wake and funeral for our Sister Jennie Palma will take place in St. Albert's Chapel on Thursday, October 5, 2023. Visitation will be at 9:45 AM with a Prayer Service at 10:15 AM followed by the Mass of Christian Burial and Interment in St. Dominic's Cemetery on the Motherhouse grounds.

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