

We of Nojoshing

Nojoshing – Indian word for the area where our pioneer members settled in 1849; it means "piece of land stretching into the water." The name was changed later to Saint Francis, Wisconsin.



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We celebrate the memory of our beloved Sister Barbara Barry (nee Agnes) May 14, 1934 – January 27, 2024

Sister Barbara Barry was born in Wilkes Barre, Pa., to Michael and Eleanore (Bieble) Agnes. At baptism she was given the name Barbara Ann.

As a teenager Barbara felt a call to religious life and was prepared after high school to enter a community she had applied to. However, she was not accepted. Barbara would meet George Barry and they married. She described him as "a loving, serious, caring, and faith-filled man."

Together they raised five children: Rev. Barbara Barry, Beatrice (Paul) Maggio, Kathleen (Keith) Largent, George (Joanne) Barry III, and Regina (Danny) Hayman. Sister Barbara is also survived by nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Both Barbara and George were active in their parish. Barbara wrote, "What busy Catholics/Christians we were. If the parish needed workers – a dinner needed serving, a pot needed scrubbing, a visitation needed to be made, a CCD class to be taught, a canto. All seven of us made up the choir." During the course of their marriage, George was ordained a permanent deacon. Barbara became a Third Order Secular Franciscan.

Eight months after George's death and with the support of her children, Barbara was ready to fulfill the call she had had to put aside after high school. On September 8, 1997, she entered the Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore. She had become acquainted with these Sisters when she was working at the Franciscan Center that the Sisters sponsored.

On March 25, 2000, Sister Barbara made her first profession of vows. In 2001 the Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore merged with the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi located in Saint Francis, Wis., so Barbara made her final profession in St. Francis Chapel in Wisconsin on August 16, 2003.

Sister Barbara brought some practical skills with her to community. As a wife and mother she accumulated much experience in dealing with people. She had taken 28 hours of computer courses with a grade point average of 4.0. From 1974 to 1994, Barbara was employed as an insurance specialist and computer specialist. Often her duties as an instructor/ teacher included creating packages to teach.

In 1999, Sister Barbara returned to the Franciscan Center. Her duties included serving as the Development Assistant and HR/Business Manager. Her appreciation of working with persons in need was evident. Following her retirement in 2009, she served as the local treasurer from 2014 to 2019 at Clare Court Convent in Baltimore, where she lived. In May of 2019, she moved with a group of the Sisters from Baltimore to St. Francis Convent in Saint Francis, Wis.

Those who knew Sister Barbara found her to be outgoing, full of life, well read, generous with her time, and prayerful. She listed her hobbies as reading, sewing, needle work, and arts and crafts. Nature, walking, friends, and children energized her. She loved the theater and knew

it well from her own experience. Her daughter Barbara wrote about her mother's life as an actor.

Mom didn't get involved in theatre until her 40s. The priest who served the church our family was part of was very talented and each year directed a play. My entire family participated in the plays, both as actors and backstage. We were a one-stop shop. Mom starred in many of those plays. She was Dolly in "Hello Dolly" and Vera in "Mame." From there she found her gift to be theatre and acted in TV commercials and professional dinner theatres.

Barbara also shared this story:

Mom and Dad were not just churchgoers, but actively lived their faith out in the community. After his retirement from the Social Security Administration, Dad started a volunteer program where volunteers would help street people with requesting and receiving benefits. During one volunteer training session, in walks a woman who smelled bad and looked worse. She mumbled to herself, walked to the middle of the group, and sat down. Dad spoke to the woman kindly, thanked her for coming and invited her to share about her life on the streets. Dad spoke of the importance of giving people dignity rather than seeing them as charity cases. The folks in the training session were very uncomfortable. At the end of the training, the woman stands up and takes off her wig and the foul-smelling clothes. Under all that filth was – you guessed it – Mom! The people in training were stunned! Mom then proceeded to give a pointed lecture about looking beneath the covering to find the person inside. A good object lesson for all.

In 2022, Sister Barbara celebrated her silver jubilee of entrance to the convent and wrote this reflection as she prepared for the Jubilee celebration:

My spiritual journey has been unique. Although my life in community has been short – the call to religious life has always been there. As I left high school, I knew the Spirit was calling me. But circumstances made it impossible to enter.

As part of the laity, I led a very faithful life with my husband and children. After my husband's death, I knew the Spirit was still calling me. The Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore welcomed me with open arms. I brought with me many life experiences. In return, the Sisters showed me how deeply the Holy Spirit loved me by introducing me to my ministry to the poor.

As a young woman, Sister Barbara was a caregiver for her mother and, at the end of her husband's life, she was a caregiver for him. When her health began to fail, it was her turn to be the recipient of caregiving by the medical staff and Sisters. Eventually, she made the decision to enroll in hospice at St. Francis Convent; she was anointed by Father Jim Schroeder, SCJ. Sisters began sitting with her on January 23, and the congregation was invited to also keep vigil with her in prayer. On January 27, at a quarter to midnight, God called Sister Barbara into the fullness of eternal life. Sister Regine Ehm was present when Sister Barbara died peacefully.

Sister Barbara answered God's final call: "Here I am, Lord." May she rest in peace.

Sister Marcia Lunz, OSF