



Sister Barbara Connell, SC

Entered eternal life on September 7, 2022

Sister Barbara Connell, in her very quiet way, was a great force for good within our Community and beyond. Several sisters said to me, “I never heard her say anything negative.” They were right. Barbara was a very positive person. I knew her to be a contemplative person, always seeking to know and do God’s will for the world – that is, to promote a wholesome life for all people and the earth.

Barbara was born on August 12, 1929, in Boston, the daughter of William and Margaret Connell. She attended Saint Joseph Academy in Boston and Saint Mary High School in Brookline. She went on to receive a bachelor’s degree from the College of Saint Elizabeth and master’s degrees in Latin, Theology and Holistic Counseling. During her long years serving our mission she was active as a teacher in elementary and high schools, served as supervisor of schools for the Southern Province, served as the Director of Novices, and entered the world of

religious education, retreat work and spiritual direction – all very effectively.

Barbara and I were asked to form a team to continue the work for the Cause of Sister Miriam Teresa in 2012 after the death of Sister Marian Jose’ Smith. Barbara was, perhaps, better acquainted with Sister Miriam Teresa but we both accepted the challenge of preparing for her beatification on October 4, 2014, at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark – a wonderful event in the life of our Congregation. By then, Barbara and I had become much more knowledgeable and appreciative of the life of Sister Miriam Teresa and her importance as a model for us Sisters of Charity. We recognized that her holiness flowed from her intimate union with God and was lived out in the humdrum of everyday life. Through her observance of our Holy Rule and through her writings she encouraged all people to seek and serve the will of God in ways small and large. As she walked these halls, prayed in this chapel, and related to all with whom she lived and worked, we have been given proof that holiness can and should be the goal of every one of us. I say all of this because I believe that Barbara took seriously the message of Blessed Miriam Teresa, quoting the words of Jesus, “‘If anyone loves me, she will keep my word and my Father will love her and we will come to her and make our dwelling with her’ - this promise is held out to all regardless of calling.” This promise is held out to all of us.

I do believe that Barbara did love God with all her heart and that she not only kept God’s word in her heart but shared it in her roles as teacher, spiritual director, and companion on the journey of life. She went about her work quietly, spreading that message, moving the mission and vision of Blessed Miriam Teresa forward, accomplishing a great deal while I usually got the credit.

Barbara was a voracious reader and a talented writer. She used both gifts for the service of God and others. One of her significant accomplishments was editing and publishing the “Stations of the Cross,” using the words of Blessed Miriam Teresa. The booklets are being used by many parishes and individuals with great appreciation. Barbara’s influence will live on for years to come. Barbara’s many contributions to the League Bulletin helped to move Blessed Miriam Teresa from being a woman of her time to becoming a woman for our time, a woman for all time. Thank you, Barbara.

We have with us today several of Barbara’s nieces and nephews whom Barbara loved dearly and kept in touch with over the years. She was especially happy when any of them came to share holidays with her here at the Motherhouse. Thank you for your presence with us today to celebrate the life and legacy of your aunt – a very special woman to you and to us Sisters of Charity.

We will all miss Barbara's quiet and positive presence among us, but we rejoice that she is enjoying her new life in the presence of God. We believe that she will find ways to spend her heaven doing good upon earth, as she did during her seventy-five years as a Sister of Charity. We look forward to meeting you again, Barbara, to share with you the richness of your relationship with God.

Sister Mary Canavan, SC