

Sister Barbara Aires, SC



Sister Barbara Aires, 89, formerly Sister Barbara Francis, a Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, passed away on September 9, 2026, at Jersey City Medical Center, Jersey City, N.J. Sister Barbara was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 4, 1937, the daughter of Francis and Julia (Lynch) Aires. She entered the Sisters of Charity on September 6, 1955, and was a member for 71 years.

Sister Barbara graduated from the College (University) of St. Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J. with a B.A. degree in History and from Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J with an M.A. in History. She was an educator in New Jersey having taught in Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School, West Orange and St. Aloysius High School and the Academy of St. Aloysius, both in Jersey City. It is very clear that Sister Barbara was a very effective and passionate teacher, as some of her former students referred to her as “the best” and “a fantastic teacher.”

Sister Barbara was elected to and served in several leadership positions within the Congregation. She was a member of the Provincial Council for the Northern Province Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, a member of the General Council of the Congregation, and in this position served as the Secretary and then as Treasurer of the Congregation, and her recent ministry was that of the Director of Property and Building Projects for the Congregation. Sister Barbara also served as the Coordinator of Social Concerns for the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Houston, Texas. Her commitment, dedication and advocacy were always driven by her great love and care for those whom she was serving, especially for those who were poor and underserved.

For over 50 years Sister Barbara assumed the role of shareholder advocate representing the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth at the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). When she was recognized as a Legacy Winner, it was noted that “Sister Barbara’s faith and concept of corporate responsibility and her commitment to seeing it manifest in the decision-making is legendary here at ICCR. Her conviction when advocating for corporate change gives meaning to the phrase ‘speaking truth to power.’ The great personal qualities and gifts that Sister Barbara contributed have always been evident – perseverance, a burning passion for the poor and victims, care for all of God’s creation, a firm but gentle supervising hand, a sense of humor and great love.” She certainly was a tenacious advocate for justice, and she always challenged others to focus on potential solutions and not the problem. From her presence at shareholder meetings to her many “straightforward conversations” with corporate executives, Sister Barbara’s sphere of influence has reached so many people, inspiring awe, the deepest admiration and the most profound respect. Her legacy will continue to impact those who have known her, who have worked alongside her, and who have benefited from her skill, commitment and dedication to assist others to be able to live in a more just and peaceful world. Countless people have and will continue to share their memories of and gratitude for her life. She will be greatly missed.

Sister Barbara is survived by her Sister of Charity community, especially Sister Rosemary Smith and Sister Roseann Mazzeo, and her sister Dorothy (Dotsy) and brother-in-law Thomas Fitts, brother-in-law Ollan Cassell, sister-in-law Eileen Sullivan and many cousins, nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. She was predeceased by her parents Francis and Julia, her brothers Francis, Gerald, William, John and her sisters Mary Joan O’Connor, Judy Farquhar, Baby Eileen Aires, Alice Taylor and Catherine Cassell.

The wake and funeral for Sister Barbara will be held at Holy Family Chapel, Convent Station, New Jersey on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. The Mass of Christian Burial will begin at 11:30 am and will be livestreamed. Burial will follow in Holy Family Cemetery, Convent Station, New Jersey. Funeral arrangements are under the direction of S. J. Priola Funeral Services, Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Sisters of Charity Office of Legacy and Mission Advancement, P.O. Box 476, Convent Station, New Jersey 07961-0476 would be greatly appreciated.