

Sister Barbara Aires, SC

Entered eternal life on September 9, 2026



We come here to celebrate yesterdays and tomorrows filled with an attitude of gratitude for the gift of being human and a deep longing for a deeper faith in the meaning of Barbara's new birth, new life expression.

I want to suggest:

We come here knowing that what I am is some of her energy living in me.

We come here knowing what Barbara is... is some of our energy living in her.

These times beguile us with more questions than answers but we, who are part of the Sisters of Charity, know the answer is love. Yes, one large life circulating through all... We are evolving in harmony with the Becoming God.

I want to suggest we come here trying to make present the hope and longing of this dedicated Sister of Charity who truly knew the journey of justice is long. Barbara questioned, and she befriended HOPE.

Barbara knew that solidarity is not just a vague feeling of compassion. No, for her solidarity was an attitude, a virtue, a duty. She knew it as a fierce and firm determination to want to commit oneself to the good of all.

Barbara knew the journey of Justice was and is long. She focused on what would give her and us the strength, energy and passion to engage in consistent and effective advocacy and networking on behalf of all who are powerless and voiceless.

My friends, this world seems so broken, so wounded. Barbara knew and wanted us to know that we need to exhale, stay awake, not be paralyzed or become numb to all we hear and see. She knew right now nothing is more dangerous than giving up hope.

Barbara is still asking us these questions:

What does it mean to live, to study, to serve in a world that gets smaller each day?

How do we promote a culture of non-violence?

How do we mainstream non-violence as a spirituality, a life style, a universal ethic?

Can we finally say there is no just war?

Another question from Barbara: Can we be mid-wives to assist at the birthing of a new world so long emerging but truly off course?

Sister Barbara started her ministry as a Sister of Charity teaching first grade at Our Lady of Lourdes school in West Orange. Yes, first grade! She went on to teach high school at Saint Aloysius High School in Jersey City and also taught at the Academy of Saint Aloysius in Jersey City. Many of her students returning for alumni/alumnae gatherings describe her still as their best teacher.

Sister Barbara was elected to and served in several leadership positions within the Congregation.

She was a member of the Provincial Council of the Northern Province and a member of the General Council of the Sisters of Charity. Her most 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.

For over 50 years, Sister Barbara assumed the role of shareholder advocate representing the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth at ICCR (Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility).

Sister Barbara had a burning passion for the poor and victims, care for all of God's creation, and a firm but loving way to speak the truth to power. She was truly an advocate. for justice.

Barbara truly loved her family; Mother and Father and all 9 siblings! We listened to so many stories and ventures. Yes, I said 10 in her family. Yes, she was always living in community!

The gentle side, loving side of Barbara would shine as she shared stories of her own happy school days at Saint Vincent Academy in Newark, as well as her trips with close friends Sisters Rosemary Smith and Roseann Mazzeo. These two friends loved and cared for her in every loving way both during illnesses and her final days.

She loved bird watching and would travel to so many special places to delight in and relish the natural world. She would spend quiet hours at Chincoteague and the Great Swamp enjoying the horses and the number of birds. She was a quiet bird watcher and oh yes, she was a great cook as well. She had so many specialties- one of them was crab cakes! She really wanted to serve you her best and your favorite! Returning from my mission I was sure I would have a cold Coors lite and potato chips. I might add Barbara loved football and she loved watching old cowboy movies!

May I speak, not just for myself, but for all of the Sisters – the fact that we are so grateful to many of you for your faithfulness and loving care for Barbara all those times she needed you.

In conclusion I thank all who have come to celebrate Barbara's life.

~Sister Margaret (Peggy) O'Neill