



## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG

FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



S. KARLA BARKER, OSF

September 22, 2014

Dear Sisters, Associates, Family, Co-Workers, and Friends,

In her autobiography, Sister Karla Barker wrote “When it’s time for me to walk into the sunset, I pray that it will be done quietly and in beauty to the soft beat of my Earth Mother’s heart.” When her loving God called Karla at 9:40 AM on September 17, 2014, that desire was realized. She left her body peacefully and gently journeyed home.

Karla, the youngest daughter of George and Flora (Vogelsang) Barker, was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana on November 21, 1931. This date marks the Feast of the Presentation of Mary and also her mother’s birthday. She quips in her autobiography that she was a perpetual gift to her mother. Karla also credits her mother’s quiet example, prayers and encouragement for affecting her decision to enter the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg.

Karla attended St. Lawrence Elementary School and the Immaculate Conception Academy in Oldenburg. She describes herself as very active in sports even in her later years when she participated from her recliner.

Karla’s relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis called her to explore the possibility of a religious vocation, and she entered the community on September 8, 1950. She describes life in Community as a positive experience even when some of the edges were a little tattered. Her struggles with health problems called her to gain a new perspective on life and reinforced the importance of being aware of how she could respond to her own needs and the needs of others.

Karla served as a grade school teacher and principal for 35 years in Indiana, Ohio and Missouri. During a short sabbatical in 1987, she felt called to study at the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality in Oakland, CA. Her work there deepened Karla’s respect for the created world and called her to live a more balanced life. She learned to integrate Christian and Native American wisdom as she worked toward creative justice and compassion for all creation. She credits these studies with helping her to live spirituality, to accept responsibility to care for the Earth, and to embrace a new level of freedom in her living. She shared these learnings with many during her years at Springbank Retreat Center in South Carolina and continued to witness these truths to all when she moved home to Oldenburg.

The readings and songs that Karla chose for her funeral liturgy reflect her deep spirituality and her connection to Mother Earth. To quote the words from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran:

*“What is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides,  
that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?  
Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.  
And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.  
And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.”*

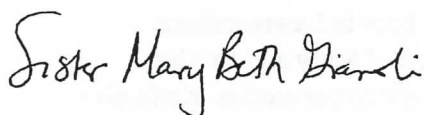
Indeed, Karla is now dancing with her God, with all who have gone before us and with all of Creation!

We extend our sympathy to Sister Karla's family. We offer our support and prayers to Karla's classmates: Sisters Mary Gloria Gallagher, Lorraine Geis, Madonna Bishop, and Sharonlu Sheridan as well as all of her Sisters, Associates, and friends.

We are grateful for all who cared for Karla, especially the wonderful nursing staff and the pastoral care team.

Thank you for all that you taught us, Karla! We are truly blessed to have known and loved you. May you enjoy eternal happiness and rest in peace.

Gratefully,



S. Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF  
*for the General Council*

#### S. KARLA (CHARLENE) BARKER, OSF

Birth: November 21, 1931

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1950

Entrance into Eternal Life: September 17, 2014

#### MISSIONS AT WHICH S. KARLA SERVED:

1953-1954	Holy Cross, St. Louis, MO
1954-1956	St. Bernard, Winton Place, Cincinnati, OH
1956-1958	St. Bonaventure, Cincinnati, OH
1958-1961	St. Anthony, Dayton, OH
1961-1971	Holy Cross, St. Louis, MO
1971-1975	Immaculate Conception, Old Monroe, MO
1975-1985	St. Mary, Aurora, IN
1985-1987	Medical Sabbatical
1987-1988	Loyola University
1988-2009	Springbank Dominican Retreat Center, Kingstree, SC
2009-2014	Motherhouse, Oldenburg, IN

*Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Weigel Funeral Home – visit their website to view Sister's online memorial, and if desired, an online condolence may be left on the site to share with her family and the Franciscan Sisters – [www.Weigelfh.com](http://www.Weigelfh.com)*

*Memorial Donations in Sister's memory may be given online at [www.OldenburgFranciscans.org](http://www.OldenburgFranciscans.org)*