



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO Box 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036
WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG



S. Barbara James

July 19, 2024

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

Very early on Thursday morning, July 18, Sister Barbara James was freed from her earthly bonds and swept into the loving embrace of her Beloved for all eternity. And like the account of the crippled man in the Book of Acts (3:8), we envision Barb joyfully “walking and leaping and praising God” as her family members and friends welcomed her home!

Barbara Ann James was born on December 11, 1941 in Indianapolis, the last of four daughters born to Ruth Tillinghast James and Arthur James. Barb never knew her oldest sister, Patricia Ruth (Patsy), as she died before her seventh birthday, a few years before Barb was born. Along with her two sisters, Barb attended grade school at St. Thomas Aquinas before the family moved to Christ the King parish out in the country. Interestingly, S. Charity Kraeszig lived next door to the James family and she remembers that Barb babysat for the Kraeszig family during Charity’s formative years!

Even as a child, Barb’s gifts of compassion and empathy for the pain of others were evident – especially when she witnessed her sisters receiving some type of reprimand from their mother. Barb’s dad was a member of a choral group and this surely was where Barb’s love of singing came from, as the girls recall that their father was always singing. Even as Barb’s health declined in these final months, visitors would often find her humming a familiar tune and lifting her praises to God.

Barb attended high school at Seccina Memorial and this is where she first met the Oldenburg Franciscans. She was especially close to her English teacher, S. Laurencia Listerman. Sadly, Barb’s mother was diagnosed with a serious illness during her senior year. Knowing she wouldn’t live long, Barb decided to stay home and work for a year after high school graduation as a telephone operator. She entered the Community on September 8, 1961.

From her first days in the Community, Barb showed herself to be a joyful, fun-loving sister who enjoyed building and nurturing lifelong friendships, including with many former convent classmates. Whether as a classroom teacher, pastoral minister, or community volunteer Barb brought her gifts of artistic creativity, liturgical dance, clown ministry, love of play, and singing. Barb was a free spirit, not unlike St. Francis, who at times was misunderstood and even ridiculed for his exuberant joy and faith.

Here is how Barb described her heart on the occasion of one of her jubilee celebrations, “My listening heart opens me to hear God’s plan for me...My Franciscan heart makes me aware of the world and the universe. My open heart hears the cry of the poor and the value of the earth and the gifts we receive. My discovering heart tells me God is limitless, and I am not alone. My grateful heart holds my community, family, and friends who have supported me along the way.”

Many Sisters and Associates will remember one of the last Community Meetings that Barb was able to attend in October of 2022. Our Women and Children’s Justice Task Force presented an amazing group of women who told stories of their transformation. As one young woman shared her story of having family members who were undocumented and in constant danger of deportation, her voice broke and she understandably began to weep. As all of us in the room waited for her to regain her composure, Barb suddenly walked up and stood

right next to our young guest, putting her arm around her and comforting her until she was able to continue with her story. This was Barb's instinctual response to anyone in need. What a witness of empathy and compassion she was for all of us!

It is not surprising that God chose to call Barb home in the same week as the feast of St. Bonaventure, who famously described our life's pilgrimage into God as a journey of *our soul*. The purity and preciousness of Barb's soul was challenged by the constraints of life here on earth. We rejoice with all the saints that her entire being has finally been set free, to know Boundless Love for all eternity.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Barb's sisters, Donna and Jackie, and her nieces, nephews, and extended family, whom she loved so much. We also offer condolences to Barb's classmates, her Sisters and Associates in Community, and to her caregivers in St. Clare Hall who offered kindness and understanding as they gently cared for her.

In loving memory,

S. Susan Marie Pleiss, OSF

Sister Susan Marie Pleiss
For the General Council

SISTER BARBARA JAMES, OSF

Birth: December 11, 1941

Entrance into Community: September 6, 1961

Entrance into Eternal Life: July 18, 2024

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. BARBARA JAMES (formerly S. Kieran) SERVED:

1964-1966 St. James, White Oak OH	1988-1989 JoAnn's Fabrics, Pryor MT
1966-1969 St. Peter, Hamilton OH	1989-1991 BAWAC, Florence KY
1969-1974 St. Mary, Rushville IN	1991-1993 St. John, Evansville IN
1974-1975 St. Mary, Aurora IN	1993-1996 Sac. Heart, Vincennes IN
1975-1977 OLPH, New Albany IN	1996-1998 St. Thomas Aquinas, Indpls IN
1977-1978 Our Lady of Victory, Cincinnati OH	1998-2003 St. Joseph, Lebanon IN
1978-1982 St. Charles Mission, Pryor MT	2003-2005 San Solano Mission, Sells AZ
1982-1983 Motherhouse, Oldenburg IN	2005-2006 St. Anthony, Clarksville IN
1983-1983 St. Francis Seraph, Cincinnati OH	2006-2007 St. Paul, Sellersburg IN
1983-1984 Lodge Grass, MT	2007-2009 St. Mary, Lanesville IN
1984-1988 St. Xavier, St. Xavier MT	2009-2024 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.

Memorial Donations in Sister's memory may be given online at www.OldenburgFranciscans.org.