



Sister Barbara Ann Beck, OSF

Professed 1960

All are One in Me. / The I AM generates the You Are / And so becomes the united WE.
 Sister Barbara Ann Beck, from her poem "Oneness: I am—You Are—We Become"



Sister Barbara Ann Beck (formerly Sister Francis Charles), OSF, passed away at her home in Assisi House on Monday, August 1, 2022. She had been a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 62 years. Through her ministry and example, Sister Barbara taught that all people are one with God. Barbara Beck was born in Detroit, Michigan. She and her sister, Carole, and their parents—Charles and Hildegard—moved to Pennsylvania, where she graduated from Bethlehem Catholic High School. Sister Barbara entered the congregation in 1957 and professed her first vows in 1960. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Neumann University (then Our Lady of Angels College) and a master's degree in spirituality and theology from Fordham University. She was a certified social worker and also held certification as a body, mind, spirit healing specialist.

During the early years of Sister Barbara's ministry, she taught in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Allentown, where in 1971, along with classroom teaching, she became principal of St. Mary School in Catasauqua. Building on her interest and experience in prayer, she was active in the charismatic renewal. She and her friend Sister Mary Ann Shambo traveled through several states preparing teachers for the Life in the Spirit Seminars. In 1975, Bishop James Schad invited Sisters Barbara and Mary Ann to share their spiritual ministry throughout the Diocese of Camden. Sister Barbara continued serving the Camden diocese for 45 years, including as director of spirituality in several parishes. During these years, she was, as she described herself, a "Franciscan itinerant minister." Sisters Barbara and Mary Ann created and led a spirituality and evangelization program for adults called Visitors for Christ; the program included retreats, courses, lectures, and other presentations for groups and individuals. Sharing her gifts with a still wider audience, Sister Barbara wrote the booklet "Pastoral/Scriptural Stations of the Cross," for which Sister Mary Ann did the artwork. Sister Barbara's article "Charismatic Renewal and the Religious Vows" was published in *Contemplative Review*, and she was a published poet. Recently she moved to Assisi House, where she served in prayer and hospitality.

Looking back over the years, Sister Barbara reflected, "Being a Sister of St. Francis has meant growing in a rich spirituality focused on a personal relationship with the Blessed Trinity, a deep love of the Risen Jesus in Eucharist, a joy in the beauty of all creation and in serving others, and above all, the freedom to follow—however and wherever—the Spirit of God has led. My heart is full of joy, gratitude, and awe at God's unfailing Love. When I began this journey, I had no idea of the unusual twists and turns this road would take; I only knew that my God—the Faithful One—was *with* me and I was with Him, and we would walk this journey together."

Sister Barbara loved people and loved life. Among her many interests, she enjoyed reading, walking, writing poetry, listening to music, swimming, going to the beach, and being with friends. "Beauty," she said, "whether in the goodness of people, in nature, or in music or poetry, draws me closer to God." Asked to consider how others saw her, Sister Barbara wrote, "My friends would describe me as deeply loyal and faithful, open, caring, a lot of fun, and a dreamer and visionary. I am a 'God-Smile' person—someone who tries to be and do everything each day to make God 'smile' and then to become aware of the little happy surprises God sends each day."

Describing her dear friend, Sister Regina Carmel McMonagle speaks of Sister Barbara's own soft smile and her profound knowledge of theology, which extended even to knowing the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas nearly by memory. Sister Regina notes that while Sister Barbara "was very prayerful, she never flaunted it. She never excluded anyone; she included everyone." Speaking of her friend's deep faith, Sister Regina shares that at the end of her life, Sister Barbara's words included, "I can't wait to see the face of God." All who knew Sister Barbara Ann Beck and all those touched by her ministry unite in thanking God for the beautiful gift of her life.

All services will be held at Assisi House on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, and will be private.
Viewing will begin at 9:30 A.M., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M.
Burial will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.
-The services will be livestreamed.-

