

Sisters of St. Francis

o f M a r y I m m a c u l a t e

Joan and Delvin Kwiatkowski welcomed their firstborn daughter on September 22, 1953, in Toledo, Ohio, and named her Barbara Ann. She and her two sisters, Susan and Kathy, were bright lights in this Polish Catholic family and often sang together as children. The family had deep Polish roots, celebrated all the Polish customs and traditions, prayed in Polish, and listened to Polish radio on Sundays.

Music was a big part of Barb's life from childhood on. As a junior high student, she organized a group of vocalists to sing at daily Mass; in high school she sang in the choir at St. Ursula Academy; and in college she was a member of the Madrigal singers. She participated in retreats for teens and played her guitar for Masses at youth gatherings in the diocese. The theme song, *Fill the World with Love*, from the movie, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, won Barb's heart as a high school sophomore, leading her to decide that this song's lyrics would be the theme of her own life. More recently, Barb reflected: "I have tried to fill my little plot of the world with love my whole life through with courage, strength and integrity."

After high school, Barb worked for a photographer and was the proud owner of a Honda motorcycle that she rode to and from work. She was active in youth ministry in the Diocese of Toledo and met the Joliet Franciscan Sisters who lived at Immaculate Conception Convent. After a few years, she began to discern seriously a call to religious life, something she had put aside several years before. At age 24, Barb joined the Joliet Franciscan Community. She later earned a bachelor's degree in religious studies and creative arts from the College of St. Francis in

Alleluia!



Sister Barbara Kwiatkowski, OSF

Joliet, and then a master's degree in educational administration from Rosary College in River Forest. Her spiritual and educational background prepared her well to minister to God's people in North and South America. Whether serving as a religion teacher, dean of students, campus minister, leader of Kairos retreats, assistant principal, or coach, Barb shared her gifts selflessly and enthusiastically with her students and colleagues. The call to minister took her to Joliet Catholic High School, St. Francis Academy, Joliet Catholic Academy, and Providence High School in the Joliet Diocese; to St. Martin de Porres Academy, St. Rita High School, and Fenwick High School in the Archdiocese of Chicago; and to San Damiano School in Aparecida de Goiânia in the Archdiocese of Goiânia, Brazil. Although her time in Brazil was short, she developed a deep love for the Sisters, the culture, the language and the people of Brazil. When she returned to the states, part of her heart remained in Brazil.

In addition to academic ministries, Barb also served the congregation as vocation minister, local chapter coordinator, councilor on the congregation leadership team, liturgist and spirituality coordinator. Two years ago, she initiated a weekly prayer experience for the

(OVER)

residents of StoryPoint Assisted Living in Romeoville and arranged for the celebration of a Mass or a Communion Service every Monday afternoon.

In the spring of 2025, Barb was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of kidney cancer. Months of consultations with specialists and hospice caregivers, as well as visits with family and friends, were mile markers on her final journey. Recognizing that she could no longer live independently, Barb joined our Sisters at St. Patrick's Residence in Naperville in mid-November. There she received loving care from the dedicated staff.

As the world readied itself for the coming of a new year, Barb readied herself for the coming of Sister Death and a new life. For many people, a popular and treasured tradition on New Year's Eve is watching a glittering ball of shining crystals descend slowly from its high perch in Times Square to the ground below, marking the passing of one year and the beginning of a new year. For all who knew and loved Sister Barbara Kwiatkowski, the first day of this new year was filled with even greater *brilliance, splendor* and *grace* as our thoughts and prayers accompanied Barb on the final day of her earthly journey. Nothing could compare with the *Radiance of Jesus, our Light*, who welcomed Barb to life eternal in the evening of January 1, 2026.

We thank God for the gift of Barb's life among us, and we join with the heavenly choirs of angels in singing loudly, "Alleluia! Alleluia!"

**Alleluia Letter written by
Sister Elaine Kerscher, OSF**

Sister Barbara Kwiatkowski, OSF

September 22, 1953—January 1, 2026

<i>Born:</i>	September 22, 1953
<i>Parents:</i>	Delvin D. Kwiatkowski and Joan R. Bialorucki
<i>Postulancy:</i>	January 2, 1978
<i>Novitiate:</i>	August 8, 1979
<i>First Profession:</i>	May 16, 1981
<i>Final Profession:</i>	June 7, 1986
<i>Entered New Life:</i>	January 1, 2026

Ministry History

1979-1980	Novice: Novitiate-Guardian Angel Home, Joliet, Illinois
1980-1981	Novice/Student: College of St. Francis, Joliet
1981-1983	Student: College of St. Francis, Joliet
1983	Student Teacher
1983-1986	Teacher: Religion, Joliet Catholic High School, Joliet
1986-1987	Teacher: Religion, St. Francis Academy, Joliet
1987-1989	Dean of Students: St. Francis Academy, Joliet
1989-1991	Teacher: Providence High School, New Lenox, Illinois
1991-1992	Assistant Dean/Teacher: Religion, Providence High School, New Lenox
1992-1996	Dean of Students: Providence High School, New Lenox
1996-1997	Assistant Principal: St. Martin de Porres Academy, Chicago, Illinois
1997-1998	Student/Pastoral Ministry: Brazilia and Goiânia, Brazil, South America
1999-2000	Administrator of Development/Public Relations: St. Rita High School, Chicago, Illinois
2000-2003	Dean of Students: Fenwick High School, Oak Park, Illinois
2003-2005	Campus Minister: Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet
2005-2008	Vocation Minister: Congregation, Joliet, Illinois
2008-2009	Vocation Minister/Director of Initial Formation: Congregation, Joliet, Illinois
2009-2011	Vocation Minister/Director of Initial Formation/Local Chapter Group Coordinator: Congregation, Joliet, Illinois
2011-2012	Campus Minister: Joliet Catholic Academy and Local Chapter Coordinator: Congregation, Joliet, Illinois
2012-2016	Campus Minister: Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet
2016-2017	Councilor/Local Chapter Coordinator: Congregation, Joliet
2017-2021	Councilor: Congregation, Joliet
2021-2022	In Transition
2022-2024	Congregation Liturgist/Spirituality Coordinator: Congregation, Joliet
2024-2025	Councilor: Congregation, Joliet

<i>Interment:</i>	Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois
<i>Predeceased by:</i>	Her parents, Delvin D. Kwiatkowski and Joan R. Bialorucki
<i>Survived by:</i>	Her sisters, Susan Shible of Toledo, Ohio and Kathy (Jim) McVicker of Rossford, Ohio, a niece, Jennifer (Joseph) Schmidt, a nephew Christopher (Larissa) McVicker and their two children Caelyn and Owen McVicker.

Rest in Peace, Sister Barbara!