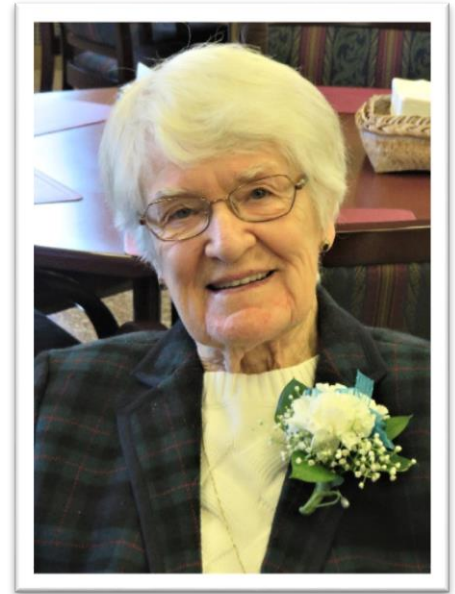


Sister Barbara Garland, SC  
Entered eternal life on September 5, 2021

In March 2007, in the letter introducing *Toward Boundless Charity*, our revised Constitution and Directory, we read:

“The words in *Toward Boundless Charity*....capture the contour and arc of our lives, giving flesh to the passion for the mission entrusted to us over one hundred and forty seven years ago... We know the real value of these documents inheres in the lives we lead, the witness we give, the day-by-day consistency between what we profess and how we live.”

Barbara Garland’s life reflects this in so many ways. Barbara had a deep and abiding love for this Congregation and its mission, and it evidenced itself in myriad ways. Her contributions and influence on the life of this Congregation will continue to challenge us as we seek to discern our emerging future.



I’ve known Barbara for sixty-five years – she taught us Geometry as a postulant and Chemistry as a Junior Professed at the Prep School. I remember her as a woman who could sometimes be impatient with those of us who did not easily grasp the lesson but who was willing to work with us to help us master the subjects – neither were my best!

In her early years, she ministered as an educator in three secondary schools in New Jersey. Early on she was engaged in cutting edge positions that caused her to live alone and at a distance - not the usual way of life for most of us at that time - she was Vicar for Personnel for the Diocese of Syracuse (which included responsibility for the Office of Clergy Personnel– unheard of at the time) for eight years . She served as the first Executive Director for the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters which took her to California and enabled her to create the initial structures for this Fund which has done so much good for the work of women religious throughout the world. After three years, she returned to New Jersey and served in a few positions at the College of Saint Elizabeth under Sister Jaqueline Burns. She then was part of the International RENEW Team and thrived in that ministry.

Within the Congregation, Barbara was often involved in Committees dealing with planning and government structures. She served twice as a Councilor. She served as the Coordinator of the Transition Team when we were moving from provincial structures to Congregational structures in 1999. She served as the Director of Xavier Center. Barbara was a woman of vision and was a risk taker – she contributed significantly throughout her life to the building up of this community.

Barbara served on a number of Boards – she especially enjoyed her time on the Board of the Hospital of St. Raphael’s in New Haven and was a strong voice at the time we were seeking options for its future, supporting the merger with Yale-New Haven Health System and speaking to how it would continue and strengthen the mission of providing healthcare for the people of the New Haven area.

She had a love of learning and a propensity to ask the hard questions throughout her life. I think of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke’s words when I think of Barbara in this regard:

“Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.”

I believe Barbara did this – she was a seeker of truth and dreamer of possibilities.

One of Barbara's loves was travel – she would often talk of her trips with her cousin, Barbara Fitzgerald of Newfoundland. They enjoyed a number of cruises together – she especially loved the cruise through Russia. A highlight on that trip for Barbara was the visit to the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and to see the icon of the Trinity by Rublev! She was an excellent photographer and would share highlights of her trips through her photos.

Her dear friend Peggy O'Neill who ministers in Suchitoto, El Salvador, could not be with us today but shared with me some things about her friendship with Barbara over the years – I will share her reflection now with you:

“Barbara entered so fully into each visit, despite the fact that she knew so little Spanish. Imagine Barbara not in control of her words! But she was so willing to step out of her own skin and quickly discovered how much we could communicate without knowing the language, but with listening and speaking with tender looks and touches.

At one visit at our Center, the Human Rights Office of the Jesuit University was hosting a mock trial. Many people from all over the country participated. One of the defendants was a young man, Rogelio, who at nine years of age was the only survivor of a double massacre of 155 people in the community of Copapayo. At the end of his heart wrenching narrative, the judge asked Rogelio now in his 20's, “How did you survive this? He did not answer this – the second question – “Who helped you survive this?” Rogelio said, “Las Hermanas de la Caridad.”

Barbara understood his answer and felt it as deeply as I did! When we left the chapel, we embraced each other with tears of thanks and renewed commitment. Barbara said “yes it is good we came, and it is good that we are still able to be here.”

In between visits, we called each other frequently to sustain each other. I am richer because of those calls that always brought me her wisdom, good questions, and loving concern. I must admit they also brought me a lot of good community gossip.”

She treasured the friendships she had within the Congregation and beyond. She was a proud member of the band who entered in Sept. 1956. Bishop Tom Costello who is now deceased and Father Michael Carmola were dear friends from her Syracuse days – and Sister Regis Krusniewski, SSND, whom she met during her brief time in Camden in the mid-1970s became a lifelong friend.

One of Barbara's favorite Scriptures passages was that of the Visitation. I remember that she used an image of this for one of her Jubilee celebrations. The Visitation for Barbara spoke of going out to others, of family and friendship. The Magnificat spoke of a woman who had great courage and whose idea of God was one of a loving, compassionate and just Being. Hospitality was part of her, she was a gracious hostess and enjoyed entertaining friends in her home.

When Seton House opened in 2008, Barbara was one of the original group to move into the new apartments. Only a few years later she had her first knee surgery in 2010. That was onset of her increasing limited mobility and failing physical health, both of which were a great cross for her.

The Sisters in Seton House have been a great support to Barbara and were particularly attentive during the past few years when Barbara was dealing with so much. She greatly appreciated their outreach and concern for her.

Barbara was at times a sounding board for me and I appreciated her candid manner in constructively helping me to gain insights into the matter at hand. I will miss her as many will, but her memory will live on and her influence will continue to be felt among us and among those she ministered with and to.

Be at peace, Barbara – good and faithful servant – woman of Charity, worthy of the name you bear.

Maureen Shaughnessy, SC