

In Memory of Sr. Barbara Ohl, S.A.

*Excerpts from the Homily of Fr. Tom Orians, S.A. at Sr. Barbara's Funeral
Funeral Mass of April 30, 2015*

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI: "Today, as in all ages, there is no lack of generous souls ready to give up everyone and everything to embrace Christ and His Gospel, consecrating their existence to His service with communities characterized by enthusiasm, generosity and joy."

Sr. Barbara was one of those generous souls—she had given to the Lord and to our community, a service "characterized by enthusiasm, generosity and joy." She was very much at peace as the reading from the Book of Wisdom (3: 1-9) suggests for she was indeed "chastised a little and greatly blessed for God has found her worthy of God's self." ... Today, she shares in that eternal life. Today, we commend this soul to the Lord, confident that He will receive her into eternal life. At the same time, we ask the Lord to comfort our community and all who mourn the loss of Sr. Barbara.



Mother Lurana wrote, "Right here lies the meaning and joy of the religious life. The Sister, by Holy Obedience, sacrifices as upon an altar to God her will, the most precious, the most costly thing she has. In return for His life laid down for her, she yields to Him the main-spring of her own life. And just in proportion to the faithfulness of her constant oblation renewed day by day, will be the intensity of her happiness and the capacity of her usefulness to God."

Sr. Barbara knew this during her life as a nun. We hear so often the phrase "we joy in God through whom we have received the Atonement." She understood what it meant to "Joy in God." Sister served the Church and our community in so many ways. You need only to look further in this morning Mass booklet and you will see her great dedication to the Church and to this community. Wherever she was assigned, she worked tirelessly to make each place a place of love and a place where God could make God's own dwelling. Of course, while we remember Sister for all that she did — and we are grateful for the many kindnesses she had shown us — we remember her for who she was. And who was she? She was "sister," a nun, a woman consecrated to the Lord by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Religious life is not about the seeking of self, but rather the seeking of God. The only reason for this choice in life is to seek to know His will, to build a community in which God is sought after and loved before all else. Sr. Barbara knew this well Sr. Barbara moved along peacefully in the certainty of being sustained by the hands of a God who welcomes and provides ... Sr. Barbara had a heart full of love and her eyes were fixed upon what was unseen, as Saint Paul writes.

.... Our reading from Wisdom reminds us that those who trust in the Lord shall understand truth and shall abide with him in Love. Sr. Barbara, in all that she did, wanted simply to encourage us, to challenge us to build on the relationship of love we can all find in Jesus Rather, for her, Jesus was always a living person, a person with whom she could have an intimate friendship, a friendship which inspired her to follow him without compromise. The purpose of Sr. Barbara's life ... to know God, to love God, to serve God in this life so as to be happy with him in the next, at least that is our old Baltimore catechism. Sister did know God, and she loved God and she served Him very well. And though we are sad because she is no longer with us, we also can rejoice because she is now with God....

Eternal rest grand unto Barbara, O Lord; may her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.