

Sister Barbara Kukla, OP



Born to Earthly Life on March 4, 1937

First Profession on August 15, 1957

Entered Eternal Life on September 7, 2025

BARBARA ANN KUKLA was born March 4, 1937 to Walter and Florence Kukla in South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was one of five children in the Kukla home, where their deep Catholic faith was a part of their daily lives. Barbara was a very artistic child and art was an important part of her life from childhood on. The Kukla family attended St. John Parish in South Milwaukee, and from those pews Barbara felt a call to religious life at a young age.

On September 10, 1954, Barbara joined the Racine Dominican community. She professed her first vows in 1957 and her final vows in 1963. She was given the religious name Sister Florence Ann, and in 1968 she returned to using her baptismal name of Barbara.

S. Barbara was a lifelong learner. She received a Bachelor's degree from Dominican College in Racine, a Master's degree from Notre Dame University in Notre Dame, Indiana, a Clinical Pastoral Education certificate from St. Luke's Hospital in Milwaukee, a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Ohio University in Athens, OH and a Master's degree in Art Therapy from Ursuline College in Cleveland, OH.

Her love of education and being open to learning new things would influence her ministry throughout her life. She began in the classroom as a teacher for more than 12 years. She taught at St. Joseph and St. Edward in Racine, St. Mary's in Mineral Point, St. Mary's in Tomah and St. Clement in Center Line, Michigan. She loved teaching and watching students learn and grow.

S. Barbara then moved into campus and community ministry. She worked at St. Patrick Parish in Racine in many different roles. She was also the Community Formation Director for the Racine Dominicans at that time as well. S. Barbara assisted at the Downtown Campus Ministry Center in Milwaukee, was a counselor and House Manager at the Shenandoah Women's Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia and was a Field Services Supervisor at the Literacy Volunteers of America, also in Martinsburg.

Throughout all her ministry work, she continued to nurture her passion for art, which would lead her into her final years of ministry. S. Barbara became an art therapist, using art to help others with their inner struggles and celebrate the beauty around them. She spent many years ministering in various places in Ohio, including Tri-Star Community Counseling and Firelands Mental Health Services. She returned to Racine and continued to offer art therapy to the Racine community. Her love of watercolor painting earned her recognition in numerous juried art shows, where her work was honored with several first, second, and third place awards—a testament to her talent and dedication. Her artwork is found throughout Siena, and was used in many documents, graphics and other pieces for the Sisters over the years.

S. Barbara was a deeply spiritual person who shared her gifts of faith and art with so many throughout her life. Just like her art, she was a woman of many colors.

