



Eulogy of Sister Barbara Jean (Jean Vincent) Tascher, BVM

Caritas Studio, Oct. 22, 2020

Good morning. It is good for us to be together to celebrate the life of our Sister Barbara Jean Tascher.

Barbara Jean Sorensen was born in Chicago on Dec. 14, 1934, to Imogene Seymour Sorensen of Fox Lake, Ill. Barbara's father, Herman Sorensen, died three months before she was born. Her mother married Vincent Anthony Tascher, who raised Barbara as his own. Eventually, Barbara's last name was legally changed to Tascher. Barbara had two step-brothers, Vincent and Paul, and four half-siblings, Edward, Carol, Mary, and Vinciann.

Barbara Jean graduated from Our Lady of the Angels in Clinton, Iowa, and entered the congregation on Sept. 8, 1952, as one of the youngest members of the set. She received the name Jean Vincent upon her reception on March 19, 1953, professed her first vows on March 19, 1955, and lived 68 years as a BVM.

The majority of Barbara Jean's teaching assignments were in the primary grades. She held a special love for first grade. She was missioned in Illinois at St. Vincent in Chicago and St. Mary in DeKalb, after which she was sent to St. Agnes in Phoenix. She also taught at St. Therese and Christ the King in Kansas City, Mo.; St. Anne in Santa Ana, Calif.; and St. Robert Bellarmine in Burbank, Calif.

Barbara Jean worked as a parish visitor for St. Charles Parish in North Hollywood, Calif., for several years. She dearly loved visiting and bringing Holy Communion to the elderly and the sick whether in their homes or at the hospital. In a newspaper article in which she was featured, Barbara Jean commented, "Most of the people I visit live alone. Loneliness is the most common complaint. They're lonely and they just want someone to talk to." Barbara Jean was a natural with personal interactions and provided the sympathetic, listening presence for which many longed.

Barbara Jean was a woman of great understanding, compassion and insight born from courageously facing the struggles and trauma of her youth. She emerged from her personal dark tunnel with a deep desire to serve others as a licensed psychiatric technician (LPT). She earned her LPT certification at Golden West College in Huntington Beach, Calif., in 1985. For the next 13 years she ministered to patients with mental and emotional illnesses at Santa Ana Psychiatric Hospital in Santa Ana, Calif., and at St. Joseph Hospital Rush Center in Orange, Calif.

St. Paul wrote to the Romans, "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to each of us . . . If your gift is ministry, use it for service." (Romans 12:6-7) Her own experience of pain and recovery enabled Barbara Jean, through the grace of God, to reach out beyond her brokenness to be a compassionate and understanding mentor. With great patience, concern, love, and skill, she journeyed with countless individuals from trauma to wholeness. This was her most fulfilling ministry. In retirement, she continued to minister to the elderly at her apartment complex whenever she saw a need.

BVMs in southern California have a history of Barbara Jean of enjoying "get-togethers." Even though distances were long, Orange County and Los Angeles County BVMs would visit one another for feast days, picnics, jubilees, and congregational meetings. Barbara always enjoyed socializing with the sisters at these special events.

In 2004, Barbara Jean moved to Mount Carmel. She now had time to delve into a wish list. She studied ancestry and worked for years trying to sort through documents to trace her family. She was jubilant when she had success.

Barbara Jean knew how to keep herself busy and enjoyed reading books, especially fiction, and a multitude of magazines. As a night owl, she often watched TV or read well past midnight. She also loved jigsaw puzzles. She'd sit at the table in the kitchenette on Caritas 2 with Rosemary and complete puzzle after puzzle. When she no longer could leave her room because of difficulty walking, she designed a new way to do puzzles—multiple trays that stacked and a hideaway main board.

Barbara Jean loved attending the monthly gatherings of her set and relished being a vital part of the group. She had the most welcoming smile. The twinkle in her eye conveyed she was so very happy to see you. Despite all her sufferings, she had the ability to laugh at life and herself and remained a very kind, gentle, and giving person.

Barbara Jean was a person of prayer who loved her God and strove “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with [her] God.” (Micah 6:8) Let us rejoice for and with Barbara Jean that she is now where she has longed to be—home in the loving arms of Jesus.