

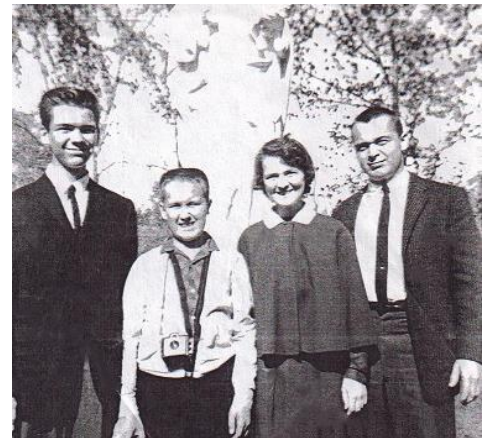


Barb Beesley was born in Detroit, the eldest and only daughter among four children. Her dad grew up on an Indiana farm and moved to Detroit to work in a factory. Her mom was born in Canada. Barb attended public school, K-12, and “showed virtually no promise or interest in becoming a nun!” Her parents’ divorce when she was an adolescent was painful.

She recognized admirable qualities in the sisters she met when she attended Marygrove. They were prayerful, compassionate, human and relatable. Attempting to “pray away the call to religious life,” she hoped to marry someone who was very, very faithful. This eventually led her to decide that “God would be her one true and faithful love.” Formation was challenging, but she found relief in the monthly Infant Circle experience, which, along with candy, provided the opportunity to socialize.

Barb wanted to be a social worker, but the IHMs convinced her to teach. She indicated that St. Cecilia, an integrated parish, would be her ideal placement; she was sent to St. Regis and St. Hugo! When sisters could choose where to minister, she opted for Pontiac High School, a more urban and diverse environment.

*Active Spirituality for a Global Community*, a nine-month program in Cincinnati, showed her different avenues of community engagement. Barb chose to teach at Lansing Catholic Central High School, combining teaching and coordinating service opportunities for students; she found many avenues to get to know the community.



At St. Rita in Detroit, working with the Worship and Education Committees, she met the Detroit peace community and became a bridge between frontline activists and those who did not understand them. A series of Friday events took place at the administrative offices of the Bendix Corporation – at the time working on parts for nuclear arms. Those who attended were warned they would be arrested if they persisted.

Barb and others returned the following Friday, Aug. 6, the Hiroshima anniversary. She led the protesters in prayer and was arrested, ticketed and released. Instead of going home, she helped leaflet cars in the parking lot; was arrested again; didn’t accept bond; and spent four days in jail. This, and the parish’s finances, led to her job loss, which was followed by 10 years as director of *Friends Indeed* in Ypsilanti, assisting people with low income. She helped found two peace communities and continued to support peace activists.

Her work at *Groundwork for a Just World* in Detroit focused on education and advocacy for peace and human rights. Barb then accepted a dual job at Marygrove as adjunct faculty in the Social Justice department and campus minister. She remained until Marygrove closed in 2019.



She continues her ministry with the IHM Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office, working on environmental racism issues with *Peoples Water Board*, *Pax Christi*, *Hamtramck Community Initiative*, and IHM Healing Racism Committee.

Barb is grateful to the IHM community for so many relationships and opportunities; a faith-centered way of life; and support that helped her find her path.