

Thomas Joseph Barry

September 1, 1943 – August 28, 2021



Such a man will stand firm forever. (Psalm 15)

Captain Thomas J. Barry, U.S.N. steered the splendid ship of his life safely into harbor at around 1500 on Saturday, August 28, 2021. Please join us in continuing to pray for our incomparable father.

Thomas Joseph Barry was born on September 1, 1943 to Gerald C. and Margaret E. Barry. He was younger brother to Jay, and older brother to three devoted sisters: Ann Glynn, Margie, and Barbara. Their lifelong memories of his youth feature the fine, dear character he sustained his whole life: his patient building of model ships and airplanes; his courageous protection of his young sisters against the

classic neighborhood bullies; his gentle care when his sister broke her arm roller skating; his gallantry in escorting another sister to her high school dance, to the envy of all her girlfriends. It was a very proud moment for his entire family when he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and was commissioned an officer in 1966.

Our father was honored to commit himself to defending our nation's freedoms. He served in naval surface ships for 29 years, against the threat of communist domination until the 1989 collapse of the Soviet bloc, and against the subsequent threat of terrorist domination until his retirement in 1995, with the rank of Captain. He always strove to carry out his leadership in conformity with the Gospel: the leader is the one who serves. A decade later, when his youngest son, Timothy, had begun his own Naval career on a surface ship, an Admiral's son on board the same ship approached Tim with these words: "My father told me that your father was the most highly principled officer with whom he was ever privileged to serve."

Those principles of his were anchored in a deep faith and clear understanding of the moral good. Faith and reason were never at odds in our father's life. He had an extraordinary ability to integrate the truth we know by faith into every aspect of life and the world, and vice versa. His six children had in him a just arbiter of any dispute. In any controversy, familial or global, our father was able to expand the context in such a way that made it easy to see that in some cases the contestants were both wrong, or perhaps, both irrelevantly right! Around the family dinner table, any of us might air what we had learned in school that day. A typical episode involved a misguided attempt by one teacher to undermine the compelling truth of the Gospels. Smugly, she had told the class that the founder of Christianity wasn't even Christian himself. (He was Jewish.) Our father's response: "She is absolutely right. Our Father Abraham." Then followed a fascinating narrative on the roots of Christianity in the First Covenant, of which Christ did away with neither a jot nor a tittle!

Our father's remarkable ability to make cohesive sense of life became a blessing for the inquiring minds of many adolescents. After retiring from the Navy, he devoted himself to teaching high school theology for the next 20 years, first at Bishop Kenny High School in Jacksonville, Florida, and then at Bishop England High School in Charleston, South Carolina. He was famously quoted in one valedictory speech, "If there is one thing we will all remember for the rest of our lives, it's Captain Barry's definition of Love: To Deny Oneself For the Good of Another!"

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This was a truth our father repeated and applied to almost every chapter of his moral theology classes. It is also a truth that defined our father's life. He was a thoroughly devoted and self-sacrificing man. When he suffered a major stroke in August 2015, he lost his ease of intellectual expression. But the depths of the importance he gave to relationships never diminished. Asked by his music therapist, from time to time, to name some blessings God had given him, our father would invariably reply, first and foremost, "My beloved wife Sally." If a list of 5 were required, he itemized:

- "2. Our six children, Annie, Michael, Margie, Katie, Patrick, and Timothy,
3. My four siblings,
4. My friends,
5. My music therapist."

Each of his children can testify that we were all blessed by his maxim: "The greatest gift a father can give his children is to love their mother." He had married his beautiful and vibrant wife Sally Jane in 1968, and she was the love of his life. Lovely as she was, the quality that drew him the most to her was her surpassing kindness. He considered it one of his finest accomplishments that he had convinced this wonderful woman to marry him. Our mother always admired his sterling character. But he humbly attributed his habitual virtue to his desire, first to impress her, and then to be truly worthy of her. When, in July 2019, our mother died of sudden cardiac arrest, our father's own strong heart was broken as well. He bravely endured a deep and abiding grief, for the rest of his days. Yet he sought strength in the Sacraments, consoled us in our grief, and never questioned the goodness of God, or His perfect and loving plan. From his youth, our father had relied on the Holy Spirit for insight, in the needs and decisions of every day. In his later years, this same Holy Spirit shone out in the love of our father's gaze and the wisdom in his few words.

The loss of this wonderful and loving brother, husband, father, grandfather, and man is such a sorrow for his 4 siblings, his 6 children and their spouses, 29 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild, due September 23. Please help us to pray for his everlasting joy, and for our poor world that has lost a great light. May he rest in God's sweet peace and praise. May we all have the joy of meeting him again in the company of the Redeemed, in our true homeland.

Lucky Bag 1966

THOMAS JOSEPH BARRY Orlando, Florida
Third Battalion | 16th Company

Tom attended the University of Orlando before coming to the Naval Academy. Unknown to Tom when he left his home in the "Sunshine State," he was bound for sure success. The transition to military life came easy for Tom, and he soon developed a personal pride and military bearing unequalled by many men. Tom was a valuable member of the plebe track team, and his undaunted prowess on the soccer field has never been challenged. The Bear, as he was often known to his classmates, will always be remembered for his perseverance and hard study. His amicable personality and cheerfulness won him many friends. When not on the soccer field, Tom contributed his talents to the Newman Club and Foreign Relations Club. Tom has always demonstrated the determination, quickness and drive needed by an officer. His aspirations and hopes, built around a service career, are sure not to go unanswered. Tom's eagerness and fortitude are certain to bring him many rewards.