Sister Anne Baxter was born on July 10, 1932, in San Francisco and was given the name Barbara Anne by her parents, Camille Anne McCarthy and Earle Lester Baxter, who were of English-Irish descent.

Sister Anne attended public grade schools in San Francisco and in Barstow in the Mojave Desert from first grade through sixth. She met the Adrian Dominicans at Holy Cross School in Santa Cruz, where she completed her elementary and secondary education.

She entered the postulate in June 1949 and the following December received the habit and her religious name Sister Amata Marie. A year later, she made first profession and began the first phase of her ministry as an elementary teacher.

Sister Anne’s first two years of teaching were in the Midwest at St. Agatha in Detroit and St. Columbanus in Chicago. For the next ten years, she was assigned to teach in California. In 1952, she taught third grade at St. Lawrence O’Toole in Oakland for four years.

Sister Anne made final profession on December 28, 1955, in St. Lawrence O’Toole Convent Chapel. Her mother, who was present for this special occasion, died unexpectedly the following month at the age of fifty.

Sister Anne’s next assignment was in San Francisco at St. Brendan School, where she taught for one year. The following year she returned to St. Lawrence O’Toole, where she taught for another five years.

From 1962 to 1968, Sister Anne served as principal of St. Patrick School in Bisbee, Arizona. She then returned to California to teach at St. Louis Bertrand in Oakland for six years, and one year at St. Raphael in Los Angeles. In September 1975 she wrote the following about her decision to leave St. Raphael after one year.

*I did teach at St. Raphael in Los Angeles last year but realized very soon that my decision was made without sufficient deliberation. Consequently, for the past four months I have been pursuing a position in either diocesan or public school offices in their Government Program of ESEA [Title I] for low-income families with educationally disadvantaged youth. My intent has been to function in a liaison capacity between a specific diocese and a public school district or to actually work in one of the program components (parent-education and in-service) within the public school district.*
The following spring her ministry plans had not worked out and she said, “I’m not able to take the joys and sorrows of life anymore.” In April 1976 she admitted herself into a hospital for alcoholic rehabilitation, where she remained for three weeks.

The following August, the Diocese of Pueblo, Colorado, hired her to be Coordinator of Catholic Schools. For four and a half years, she directed all school-related operations for the diocese, which included being liaison and communications link between diocesan agencies and the parochial schools.

In 1981, Sister Anne used her gifts and training to work as a community organizer in the Chicano Education Project in Denver, Colorado. Following this, she returned to Pueblo to serve as a Chemical Dependency Counselor for five years at Parkview Episcopal Hospital. An article about Sister Anne’s ministry, entitled, “Alcohol Counselor Knows the Problems from Personal Experience,” appeared in the diocesan newspaper, Catholic Crosswinds. In the interview, Sister Anne said, “I have so much genuine peace and happiness now that I want to share it.” The article went on to say:

*Her ministry today is an out-patient counselor, where she treats victims of alcoholism and drug dependencies, as well as their families. Perhaps her perspective is based upon remembering a time in her life when “peace and happiness” was a rare commodity. The focus of her work, she says, is “service ministry”*

Her last two ministries were at St. Mary Corwin Hospital in Pueblo, where she served as Psychotherapist /Family Counselor for eight years. From 1997 to 2000, she had a private practice at Stillpoint LLC in Pueblo, where she did enneagram-based spirituality counseling. In her retirement years, Sister Anne assisted senior citizens, arranged seminars for divorced parents, and cared for the local canine and feline.

Sister Anne returned to Adrian in 2015 because of declining health, which included post herpetic neuralgia or pain syndrome. She lived at the Dominican Life Center/ Maria, where she died on February 6, 2016, at the age of eighty-three and in the 66th year of her religious profession.

During the remembrance service, Sister Helen Sohn, Co-Chapter Prioress of Holy Rosary Mission Chapter, shared the following about Sister Anne’s ministries.

*Anne brought not only her professional skills and training but also her personal qualities of compassion, understanding, and empowerment attained through hard work, study and her own personal process of conversion and transformation.*

*She was so appreciative of the support and care of the Rio Grande Mission Group. She wrote: “I would like to share my gratitude for the support of*
Sister M. Susan Remsgar, OSB, a dear friend and companion, shared these memories of Sister Anne.

Anne is the love of my life. She is much more than a dear friend; she is my soul sister. I am blessed and forever grateful to have shared thirty-nine years of life with her.

Over these many years, I came to know Anne as a genuine, tough, resilient, strong, tender, intense and wise woman. She did not need to impress others nor herself for that matter. She could stand her ground and go toe to toe with anyone. Anne overcame many illnesses in her life, including alcohol addiction. Her vulnerability became her strength and she helped many people in their recovery because she personally knew and understood their journey.

Anne was not a selfish person. She gave freely and generously in so many ways to me, to my family, to her family, her students, clients, co-workers, and of course, to you, her sisters, especially those in her [Rio Grande] Mission Group.

I believe her love remains with all of us today. The only thing we take with us into the Kingdom is our relationships. So, Anne, you will always be with us and we will always be with you.

Sister Charlotte Anne Swift sent the following message:

Sister Anne Baxter was a mentor and a dear friend. She generously shared her family with me and was with me when my father died. Over the years I’ve watched her unswerving dedication and commitment and I learned a great deal from watching and helping. When things would get a little difficult in these projects Anne would say, “Remember, a turtle never moves forward without sticking its neck out.”

Sister Lois Paha sent the following message from the Rio Grande Mission Group.

Anne was a faithful member of the [mission] group and always willing to add her expertise to our sharing. She had a great gift for helping people understand themselves to the best of their ability.

Sister Vicky Dalesandro, also a Rio Grande mission group member, wrote,
I am very grateful for Anne’s friendship and for the learnings about the Enneagram that she brought to our Mission Group. Many times when we met I had a chance to share life with her.

During the funeral liturgy Father Jim Hug, SJ, offered the following prayer.

May God bless us all with a full and generous share of Anne’s --

  Sense of God’s transforming presence
  Compassion, understanding and gift for empowering others
  Contemplative love for the beauty and peace of God’s creation
  Spirit of gratitude and her care for all God’s little ones in need.
LEFT: Sister Anne Baxter, left, and Sister Charlotte Swift, with Charlotte’s mother. RIGHT: From left, Sisters Nelda Ann Klein, Bernice Nofs, Eleanor Stech, Marie Amada Garcia, and Anne Baxter.

LEFT: Sister Anne, right, with her long-time Benedictine housemate, Sister Sue Remsgar, OSB. RIGHT: With Cesar Chavez

RIGHT: Faculty at St. Patrick School, Bisbee, Arizona, 1965-66 – back row, from left: Sisters Anne Baxter (principal), Anne Russell, and Jean Francis Wehrmann, and front, from left, Sisters Clara Patricks and Ann Laurence Harman.

Visiting Alcatraz (far right)