Thomas Kennealy: 00:03 Good afternoon. My name is Father Tom Kennealy, and I'm the university historian at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Today is Thursday, November 29, 2018, and I am here in the McDonald Library on the Xavier campus. With me is Mrs. Barbara Trauth who has graciously agreed to be interviewed this afternoon for Xavier's Archives' Collection of Oral Histories.

Thomas Kennealy: 00:33 First of all, let me give you some background on Barbara Trauth. Barbara graduated from Edgecliff College in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in fine arts. She is also an alumna of the Cincinnati Art Academy. Her career in visual arts included work as a designer for Gibson Cards and the Lazarus art department. Barbara's art work has been widely exhibited in such places as the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Art Academy of Cincinnati, University of Dayton, the city hall in Nagasaki, Japan and here at Xavier University. She has received many commissions for sculptures, paintings, and children's books from area churches and both corporate and private collectors. She has also served a term on the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and a term on the Edgecliff Alumni Board of Xavier.
Thomas Kennealy: 01:48 And we might as well begin at the beginning. Maybe you could tell us something about your childhood and your early education?

Barbara Trauth: 01:54 Yes, well, first of all, I want to thank you for inviting me to speak with you, and it's an honor to be here.

Thomas Kennealy: 02:01 Good. Good to have you.

Barbara Trauth: 02:02 So I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. I'm the oldest of eight children, and my father was in the Pacific campaign in World War II, and he came home after the war in 1945. He met my mother at my grandfather's bowling alley downtown on 6th Street, and they were married the next year, and the year after that I was born. I was the oldest of eight children.


Barbara Trauth: 02:31 Yes. And so I went to, I think when I was in kindergarten, my teacher told my parents that I had a talent in art. I remember that I had sculpted a little fox, and I loved working in clay, so I sculpted this little fox, and so the teacher told my parents that I had a talent in art and so then when I was in first grade, my father took me every Saturday to Saturday classes at the Cincinnati Art Museum. And I took those classes until middle of fifth grade when we moved to Madeira, Ohio, and I went to Saint Gertrude's Grade School in Madeira. But the die was cast and I had learned much from being exposed to so much beauty at the Art Museum. And so I just love creating art, and I and a couple of other students were always the artists in the class in grade school.

Barbara Trauth: 03:33 And then in high school actually, my parents were both very sick, and I spent a lot of time in hospitals with them. And so it gave me an interest in nursing, and so I decided that I would be practical and get a
I went to Regina High School and from there I went to Mercy School of Nursing, and then I graduated from Edgecliff as you said in 1969. The next year Joe and I were married, and it was after he came home from the Peace Corps, and then that year he started law school.

Law school. And now how many children and grandchildren do you have?

We have five children, two girls and three boys. And we have eight grandchildren, almost nine.

Almost nine.

We have six girls, two boys, and I think it's another boy.
Thomas Kennealy: 04:49 Well, we'll have to wait and see. [both laugh] So when you left high school, where did you go to high school?

Barbara Trauth: 04:55 Regina High School.

Thomas Kennealy: 04:55 Regina High School which was in Norwood. No longer exists. And then you went to nursing school-

Barbara Trauth: 05:02 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 05:03 What school was that and what prompted you to go to nursing school?

Barbara Trauth: 05:09 Well because of my interest because of both my parents being sick.

Thomas Kennealy: 05:13 Okay. All right.

Barbara Trauth: 05:13 And I decided to go to Mercy School of Nursing which was in Hamilton, Ohio and it was the same Mercy nuns, the same Mercy order taught there as taught at Edgecliff College.


Barbara Trauth: 05:27 And so when I would finish my nursing studies each night, I would sketch for an hour or so after that.

Thomas Kennealy: 05:38 So you hadn't lost your interest in art?

Barbara Trauth: 05:38 No.

Thomas Kennealy: 05:38 Okay.

Barbara Trauth: 05:38 After a year, after much soul searching, I decided that I would transfer to Edgecliff College, and I sort of rationalized it that I could get a degree in sociology, be a social worker and that I could help people that way, that it was close to nursing. And so I was struggling between getting a degree in art, but I realized at Edgecliff I would be exposed to a lot of art classes also. And then at the end of the year sophomore year, you have to declare a major, and so it was a struggle, but I decided that I would not ignore my talent in art and that I felt like I could help people
in that way also, and I could always volunteer. So I decided to get the degree in fine art and not in sociology.

Thomas Kennealy: 06:26 Even though it was less practical.

Barbara Trauth: 06:28 It was less practical.

Thomas Kennealy: 06:29 Practical, but it made more sense to you. What was your parents' reaction when you changed from the nursing school to Edgecliff?

Barbara Trauth: 06:36 They were very disappointed to say the least. [both laugh]

Thomas Kennealy: 06:39 But eventually recovered?

Barbara Trauth: 06:41 Yes, they did. Especially when I graduated and got a job.

Thomas Kennealy: 06:45 Oh, that's right. That was good, probably what they had in mind in the first place. What was Edgecliff College like when you were there as an undergraduate? How would you describe it?

Barbara Trauth: 06:55 I just thought that it was just a beautiful setting. It was actually an oasis of peace. The world seemed like it was going crazy at that time. There was the Vietnam War. There was the riots going on, and then in 1968 there was the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy, and it was just this oasis of peace where we could learn culture and beauty and all the things that we needed to maybe take out into the world that would help the world-

Thomas Kennealy: 07:35 Help the world.

Barbara Trauth: 07:35 ... be a better place, yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 07:36 Sure. Sure. What kind of courses did you take? Obviously you had your art courses, you're a sculptor. What other courses would you have taken while you were at Edgecliff?
Barbara Trauth: 07:44 Well, there were the ones that you needed to take to get your baccalaureate degree.

Thomas Kennealy: 07:48 Your basic liberal arts courses.

Barbara Trauth: 07:50 You know, philosophy, theology. I took sociology courses.

Thomas Kennealy: 07:57 Probably literature courses and history.

Barbara Trauth: 07:59 Literature, French.

Thomas Kennealy: 08:00 Sure. Do you think you got a good education at Edgecliff?

Barbara Trauth: 08:04 Looking back I really do. At the time, I felt like it gave us a Catholic perspective of history, culture, but at the same time, we were being prepared to go out into the world.

Thomas Kennealy: 08:26 And were there certain professors that you had while you were at Edgecliff that you remember fondly for the work they did-

Barbara Trauth: 08:35 Definitely.

Thomas Kennealy: 08:35 ... and the influence they had in your life?

Barbara Trauth: 08:37 Definitely. James Kennedy was the art professor. He made art history come alive. Every era, he made it interesting and understandable and exciting, and also he taught sculpture.

Thomas Kennealy: 08:53 Okay, which you were very interested in.

Barbara Trauth: 08:55 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 08:56 Along with painting were the two.

Barbara Trauth: 08:57 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 08:58 Yes.

Barbara Trauth: 08:58 But it was more, in fact, it was more the emphasis in sculpture because he made me want to be a sculptor.
Thomas Kennealy: 09:08 Good.

Barbara Trauth: 09:10 What he taught was exciting and understandable in art, but also in sculpture, and so it just made me want-

Thomas Kennealy: 09:19 He really inspired you.

Barbara Trauth: 09:20 ... to ultimately do that in my life is to become a sculptor because he was such a very good sculptor himself.

Thomas Kennealy: 09:25 And I think he was one of the professors who came over to Xavier when we purchased the school if I'm not mistaken. I think he was in the art department for a short period of time. I'm sure you have fond memories of Sister Mary Virginia Sullivan.

Barbara Trauth: 09:40 Well, yes. I think so. I mean she was the head of the college at the time.

Thomas Kennealy: 09:46 She was the president.

Barbara Trauth: 09:46 And of course we would see her when she would come through the campus. So I think the fact that I came in my sophomore year, I was not as acclimated as other students were to the administration. So I don't feel like I knew her as well as probably some other people did.

Thomas Kennealy: 10:11 As some other people would have, yep. As you look back, what is your fondest memory of Edgecliff then?

Barbara Trauth: 10:17 Well, my fondest memory is that it was, I felt like a little bit of heaven. It was, not to be too Pollyanna, but it was like Camelot. It was this beautiful campus perched above the city with this view, especially from the art department of the river and meandering pathways from one building to the next where we were able to be inculcated with our Catholic culture, academia and one of the most distinct memories I have was right before graduation, and I think I was in a show, a senior show in Emery Hall.

Thomas Kennealy: 11:07 Which was right on the brow of the hill, wasn't this? Overlooking the Ohio River?
Barbara Trauth: 11:12 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 11:12 A beautiful building. I remember it.

Barbara Trauth: 11:13 It was a beautiful building. It was built by the Emery's. They brought it over piece by piece from Switzerland.

Thomas Kennealy: 11:17 Oh, is that right? I didn't know that.

Barbara Trauth: 11:18 It was like a castle. And it was an exquisite building. And I stepped outside onto the front porch, and you could hear this piano concert wafting through the campus, and I realized that it Joeline Adams Lecture, it was her senior thesis.

Thomas Kennealy: 11:39 From Maxwelton Hall, maybe.

Barbara Trauth: 11:40 From Maxwelton Hall, the music department. And I just stood there and I guess I was just stricken by the whole feeling of visual beauty, audio beauty. It was a wonderful spring day, and then I realized, it's almost over, and I will no longer possess this. But then I consoled myself with the idea that I will take everything I've learned with me and that we can present that to future generations especially of your own children and you will bring what you learned in this Catholic culture in this beautiful area of academia of culture and art and faith and you will bring it out into the world.

Thomas Kennealy: 12:33 So very happy memories.

Barbara Trauth: 12:34 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 12:35 I understand. How do you see the spirit and the legacy of Edgecliff continued here at Xavier?

Barbara Trauth: 12:43 Well, I think that the feminine infusion into a boys' college, a men's college, brought in a deeper aspect of art and music and theater into the school and of course many of those professors brought that with them from Edgecliff, and so it gave the college more of a sensitive and feminine aspect.
Thomas Kennealy: 13:14 And certainly some wonderful departments as you mentioned came along. We didn't have an art department. We didn't have a music department or a theater department, or nursing. I think they really... Now nursing is a big deal here at Xavier and I think we really owe that to Edgecliff. It's wonderful. How and when did your art career begin then? How would you describe that for us?

Barbara Trauth: 13:38 Well, when I was a senior, the head of the art department, Sister Mary Rosine, started pestering me about the fact that I didn't have a teaching certificate. She says, "You're not going to get a job. You better get a teaching certificate."


Barbara Trauth: 13:55 And I don't think I said this to her, but I thought in my brain, "Watch me." I didn't want to be disrespectful, but I applied at the art department at what was then Shilito's and at Gibson Cards and I was thrilled when I was hired by Gibson Cards and my parents were thrilled. And so I was in their, well, instruction department where they were teaching you how to do these small cards.

Thomas Kennealy: 14:29 Gibson instruction department?

Barbara Trauth: 14:31 Yes. And so I was there several months and to go from doing large sculptures and large paintings to these little tiny cards was a very difficult thing and I think at that time in my life, I did not have the patience. And so in the middle of all of that, when I was realizing that maybe this wasn't for me, I got a phone call from Shilito's, Macy's, Lazarus.


Barbara Trauth: 14:57 And they had an opening, and they offered me a job in their art department. And so I started work there, and I worked there up until our first child was born a few years later. And so that was a great experience. That was downtown-
Thomas Kennealy: 15:17 I'm sure it was, and a good start to your career as well.

Barbara Trauth: 15:19 It was.

Thomas Kennealy: 15:21 But you studied painting and sculpture at the Cincinnati Art Academy for a number of years.

Barbara Trauth: 15:26 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 15:26 Tell us about those years, your experience there.

Barbara Trauth: 15:29 Well, that was sort of humbling and exciting at the same time because you realized when you came into the Art Academy that this was where Duveneck and Farny and Sharpe and Pothast studied and taught, and so it was very humbling and at the same time, intimidating, but it made you want to do your best. And so yes, I did take painting, more oil classes there than I took at Edgecliff. It was more watercolor at Edgecliff. And then casting classes and sculpture classes at the Art Academy. And then one thing that I do remember from going there was it was more than a hundred years old and the steps going up to the second floor studios were worn down, and I thought about all of the artists, those famous and those obscure, who had gone up and down these steps-

Thomas Kennealy: 16:31 Climbed those steps, yes.

Barbara Trauth: 16:32 And also there was a secret entrance into the, I call it a secret entrance. I don't know if it was secret. But people from the Art Museum knew about it, the Art Academy I mean, on the second floor where you could enter into the museum, and I loved going into the museum with my painting frock on and walking around on the second floor. You felt like you were a member of a secret club or something. And of course, it brought back memories of when I was a child and I took the classes there at the museum.

Thomas Kennealy: 17:04 So obviously a very, very rewarding period of time for you.
Barbara Trauth: 17:07 Yes, it was and it was over a seventeen-year period and when my children were little, I'd get them ready for bed, for Joe's sake, and then I'd go off and take a three-hour painting class at the Art Academy. And then there were many years when I was able to take them when the kids started school during the day.

Thomas Kennealy: 17:25 Wonderful. You have often said, Barbara, that the real inspiration, not only in your personal life but in your art, has been your Catholic faith. Could you explain that for us?

Barbara Trauth: 17:35 Yes. Well, I was thinking about that and I said to myself when was that moment that you remember and I think it was in seventh grade, so I would have been around thirteen years old and I was in the choir at St. Gertrude's, and we were having choir practice in the basement of the school, and there was this huge explosion and simultaneously, all the windows and doors of the school slammed open and shut, and what I forgot to mention was that we were singing the Ave Maria at the time. We were practicing the Ave Maria. And of course as soon as that happened, there was dead silence and it took a couple of seconds and then our principal came over the PA and she said that a plane had crashed, had skimmed over the top of the school. And I guess they thought that they could... The engines were on fire. It was Champion Paper Company. And thought that they could land in our playground, but then realized that it was too small and they skimmed over the top of the school and crashed about, I don't know, about 500 yards away.

Barbara Trauth: 18:55 And so it was not lost on me that we were basically, they say when you sing, you pray twice and so that I think gave me my devotion to the rosary and the Hail Mary and ultimately I think that that devotion to the rosary which brings, I think you're inspired by the Holy Spirit many times, and I think that has given me my direction in life and what I wanted to do and what kind of artwork that I wanted to do.

Thomas Kennealy: 19:31 I think you have said often, you really feel the Holy Spirit.
Barbara Trauth: 19:35 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 19:35 It's really guided a lot of the work you've done.

Barbara Trauth: 19:38 Absolutely.

Thomas Kennealy: 19:39 It's been the inspiration for much of your art.

Barbara Trauth: 19:41 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 19:42 Good for you. Good for you. One of your very first sculpture's, Barbara, was entitled Ethiopian Madonna.

Barbara Trauth: 19:49 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 19:50 It's about famine in the country of Ethiopia. How did you become interested in this subject? How did this particular work come about?

Barbara Trauth: 19:58 Well, it was very simple. I saw an image in the newspaper of an Ethiopian woman with her two starving children, and it just, as I would put it, seared my heart as a mother and so I really, it was a beautiful and tragic image that I wanted really to recreate in clay three-dimensionally because when you see such sorrow and when you see in a newspaper and then you take the newspaper, and most people, they see it and they're sad and what happens to the newspaper? It's thrown away.

Barbara Trauth: 20:34 So I wanted to set this image in stone, which is what I did. And so I was able to do this three-dimensional version of this image so that her suffering was not lost, what she was going through. I could do my little bit to bring it to the world.

Thomas Kennealy: 20:57 How large would this image be?

Barbara Trauth: 21:01 I would say it's about 20 inches high.

Thomas Kennealy: 21:05 20 inches, okay. And what material? Stone you said?

Barbara Trauth: 21:08 It was clay-
Barbara Trauth: 21:10 Actually ceramic.

Thomas Kennealy: 21:12 Ceramic.

Barbara Trauth: 21:12 Yes.


Barbara Trauth: 21:13 It's my intention and I really feel like I need to do this, to cast it in hydrostone which it'd be more permanent but I haven't done that yet.

Thomas Kennealy: 21:22 Got to that point-

Thomas Kennealy: 21:23 Maybe on the to-do list one of these days. Yeah. But then you became very interested in the subject of genocide and the Holocaust in particular and this research eventually led to one of your more notable pieces, The Earth Cries Out in Remembrance. Could you tell us about that work and how it came about?

Barbara Trauth: 21:41 Yes, well, I love to read and at that point I had small children, but I was reading a lot of books about the Holocaust, and they were so disturbing. And it was just such a terrible time in the world's history, and I just was so upset by this, but I realized that I needed to stop reading these books because I was just crying all the time, and I needed to be a good mother to my children. But I placed it in my heart that some day, I would do a sculpture about the Holocaust. I wasn't sure how I would do it or what it would look like, but this was sort of festering in my mind how this would be.

Barbara Trauth: 22:24 And finally one afternoon, I was able to put this image in my mind of how I wanted to do these images of these survivors of the Holocaust. And so there were three figures. They were not that high. About that tall, [gestures sculpture height] maybe about 18 inches tall. So I began the sculpture. I didn't know for what reason. Just for my own conscience that I need to do this and my own sorrow about this and so a few days later I read in the newspaper that on the very day that I started the sculpture was the 40th anniversary of the Liberation of Dachau. And so that was just a stunning
revelation to me, and it made me realize that maybe these people, these anonymous people who were thrown into mass graves were crying out from the earth for remembrance and at that point, there weren't a lot of memorials that I knew of.

Barbara Trauth: 23:38 This was 1984-


Barbara Trauth: 23:39 So it made me realize that it confirmed my feelings about what I was doing for whatever reason and wherever it would go that at least I had done what the Holy Spirit had prompted me to do.

Thomas Kennealy: 23:52 Now how tall, you said these figures would be about 18 inches?

Barbara Trauth: 23:56 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 23:57 And in what material-

Barbara Trauth: 23:59 This again was in clay.

Thomas Kennealy: 23:59 In clay.

Barbara Trauth: 24:00 Which was ironic because when I say the earth cries out in remembrance, even as a child sometimes there was a creek behind our house, and I would go and dig clay out of the creek to sculpt little things from it. And so this clay that I was using was also from the earth where they were interred.

Thomas Kennealy: 24:19 Ah yes. Could you explain to us as an artist, when you begin to undertake a sculpture of any kind, how do you go about it, first of all, from the point of a planning, but then how do you go about it technically? For instance, if you're working in bronze as you have for some of your works, what goes on? How do you do that?

Barbara Trauth: 24:39 Well, there is a difference. If you're going to do it in ceramic, sometimes I might start something as a maquette, and it's called a maquette, which is really a three-dimensional sketch, and so I might see an
image in the newspaper that touches my heart, and I would like to reproduce that three dimensionally. I might do sketches on paper of it to begin with and then I will recreate that or create it in clay and then fire it in a kiln and glaze it or put a finish on it. But then, it's very different to do it in bronze because you will do that image in, I forget what it's called, it's non-drying clay. And then from that, you bring it to the caster, to the foundry and they will use the lost wax method of... it's a complicated method.

Thomas Kennealy: 25:43 But you have a mold of some kind.

Barbara Trauth: 25:45 They make a mold.

Thomas Kennealy: 25:46 Yes, you make a mold-

Barbara Trauth: 25:47 And then from that mold, they pour the molten bronze into that mold and that's the way the piece was done here at Xavier University.

Thomas Kennealy: 25:57 The bronze, yes. And the one we're talking about in a little bit. Yes, and now we've talked about how you create, but I'd like to get to one of your principle works and the one that honors and really adorns our library garden downstairs. This particular piece has to do with the subject of abortion, a topic that you initially resisted. Why did you change your mind and how did this particular work come about?

Barbara Trauth: 26:29 Well, I'd been suggested to people, why don't you do a sculpture about abortion and I felt that a sculpture would trivialize it at that point. I felt it was too deep and too vast and serious a subject that a piece of artwork could ever...

Thomas Kennealy: 26:51 Do justice.

Barbara Trauth: 26:51 Do justice to, yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 26:53 Okay.

Barbara Trauth: 26:53 And so it was around that time that we were having problems with one of our sons and he had gotten into a bad crowd in high school and we were very
concerned about him. So during that time, we took a pilgrimage to Medjugorje where there are purported apparitions of the Blessed Mother. And my husband and I just felt like it was a very life-changing experience. It is a wonderful place to go for a pilgrimage, and when I came home, I just felt sort of transformed like my faith had been deepened. So then we actually were able to send our son with Father John Ferone and a group of people on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje and when he came home, he was transformed. And he left behind all of his really bad habits that were giving us a lot of problems and in my joy, I knew that he had been healed, I did something that I had been wanting to do for a long time and that was illustrate a book, basically a children's book based on the work of George Frederic Handel, Messiah.


Barbara Trauth: 28:15 So I did these images, these illustrations based on each aria or recitative from Handel's Messiah. And it was such a... I don't want to forget to say this, I actually was able to get sponsors to print the book and then our parish did a concert, Handel's Messiah concert and we sold the books for the benefit of the church and school.

Barbara Trauth: 28:45 So it was such a wonderful experience of the Holy Spirit listening to this music and doing these illustrations and I really think that was what gave me the courage to then feel like, "Okay, I think maybe now I can do that sculpture." And so I did write Father James Hoff a letter explaining what I wanted to do-

Thomas Kennealy: 29:10 Okay. The president of Xavier University here.

Barbara Trauth: 29:10 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 29:10 Yes. Okay.

Barbara Trauth: 29:10 And so, he was very open to it-

Thomas Kennealy: 29:13 And why Xavier? Why did he come to mind and why did Xavier come to mind?
Barbara Trauth: 29:20 Well, first of all, because of the affiliation of Edgecliff with Xavier.


Barbara Trauth: 29:25 And I have a lot of affectionate feelings in my heart for Xavier because of my husband graduating from Xavier University and two of my children, and I felt that more than anything a Catholic institution would be more open to the idea of a sculpture with this kind of a theme. And so I was very happy when Father Hoff expressed interest in it and so that was the beginning.

Thomas Kennealy: 29:56 Now this one is done in bronze?

Barbara Trauth: 29:58 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 29:59 So this was a more formidable undertaking then?

Barbara Trauth: 30:02 Yes, it was.

Thomas Kennealy: 30:03 Than some of the others. But the unveiling of the Dance of Tears, that's the name of the piece, the unveiling was not without its controversy. What was that all about?

Barbara Trauth: 30:13 Well, my understanding is that there were people that felt, there were professors and there were people at Xavier that felt it put women in a bad light, that it would bring about feelings of guilt and this was not my intent at all. My intent was, I think it's called reconciliation art, where art can be helpful in helping, for people to be healed of any losses that they've had and to be transformed through this healing and realizing that God loves them and forgives them and that was my whole idea at that point. The way I came to it was the biblical quote that came to me and helped me get the idea for the sculpture was "when you sow the wind, you reap the whirlwind."


Barbara Trauth: 31:21 So there was was in my mind this image of these three feminine figures representing body, mind, and
soul, which all areas that would be affected by an abortion. And these feminine figures were actually made from whirlwinds of tears, the vortex being the empty womb. And these tears would flow into this kairos figure which was at the base of the figure-

Thomas Kennealy: 31:47 The kairos, representing Christ.

Barbara Trauth: 31:49 Yes, representing Christ.

Thomas Kennealy: 31:50 Okay.

Barbara Trauth: 31:50 And then from there would flow the cleansing water, and so it was my hope that when people would see this sculpture that they would be reminded of the losses that they had had and the sorrow that they had and that they would be able to be, through their faith, be healed and this is how reconciliation art works.

Thomas Kennealy: 32:14 Correct. And that reconciliation was really what you had in mind.

Barbara Trauth: 32:18 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 32:19 Good. Well, it's still ordained, it's down in the garden there and we're very proud to have it. As I understand it though, Barbara, one of your sculptures resides today in the city hall in Nagasaki, Japan. I believe it's called Memorial for the End of World War II, and it commemorates the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan in August 1945. Sounds like an interesting story. How did this come about and what is the message of the work?

Barbara Trauth: 32:50 Well, it came about because a very good friend of mine who grew up in Oak Creek, Tennessee and her father was one of the engineers who created the atomic bomb, and so she knew a lot about it obviously because she grew up there, and she actually gave me a book by a priest called The Bells of Nagasaki. And this book was about Doctor Takashi Nagai who was a doctor in Nagasaki. He was at the hospital the day that the bomb was dropped, and so he was not far from ground zero. He actually lost his wife, fortunately his children, they had sent to the mountains because
they knew that there was going to be probably an invasion. And so he was working at the hospital when the bomb was dropped. And so even though he was mortally injured himself, actually he was healed through the intersession of Saint Maximilian Kolbe who he knew.

Thomas Kennealy: 34:02 Oh, yes. Whom he knew?
Barbara Trauth: 34:04 He knew him because he was in Nagasaki. And so he took care of all of the victims that he could that were able to make their way up to the hospital after the bomb was dropped. And then within the book, it talks about this. Three days after the bomb was dropped, the Urakami Cathedral which not far from the hospital burst into flames.

Thomas Kennealy: 34:37 Now was this the Catholic?
Barbara Trauth: 34:39 This was the Cathedral of the Immaculata.
Thomas Kennealy: 34:41 Okay.
Barbara Trauth: 34:43 And a lot of people don't know this, and I didn't know this, but 95% of the people of Nagasaki were Catholic. So when, for some reason, I guess it was the infusion of the Holy Spirit, he realized that when the cathedral burst into flames, he realized the people of Nagasaki were the martyrs for the end of World War II. And so after that, he traveled the country begging the people to forgive us who had dropped this bomb. And a lot of people were against, at first, were against it but actually it was a very healing this for, especially the people of Nagasaki to forgive for what had happened. And so that was what gave me the inspiration to do the image of him and his daughter.

Thomas Kennealy: 35:43 Oh, it's an image of him and his daughter? All right.
Barbara Trauth: 35:44 And his daughter. And the back of the sculpture of him and his daughter is a destroyed image of the cathedral because I just felt that here was this beautiful image of this man, but obviously it was related to the destruction of Nagasaki and the
destruction of this cathedral which was sort of the flames of the Holy Spirit coming from this cathedral. And he also at that point heard there were nuns who were, I guess, in a monastery close by and who were singing and glorifying God as they were dying from their injuries. And so this was a very profound moment in his life, and he realized. So he was really instrumental in bringing about the reconciliation and peace within Japan.

Thomas Kennealy: 36:44 And this is his image and it is now in the city hall there?

Barbara Trauth: 36:48 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 36:49 How large a piece would that be, Barbara?

Barbara Trauth: 36:52 It's more horizontal than vertical.

Thomas Kennealy: 36:55 Okay.

Barbara Trauth: 36:55 And it's probably about 24 inches by 20 inches. And it was sent from the Japanese American Society in Cincinnati to the sister city in St. Paul, Minnesota and from there, they said that originally it was going to be in the Nagai Museum, the Takashi Nagai Museum, but they realized that they didn't have enough room. And so it is, right now, it is in the mayor's office.

Thomas Kennealy: 37:27 Am I right though there is a version of it here in Cincinnati? Is that true?

Barbara Trauth: 37:31 Yes. There's a bronze version. The one sent to Japan is hydrostone.

Thomas Kennealy: 37:35 Okay.

Barbara Trauth: 37:36 And the bronze version, which is about I don't know, it's really heavy. So that was not the one to send to Japan.

Thomas Kennealy: 37:43 So we kept that here.

Barbara Trauth: 37:47 That one is in the Cathedral Museum at Saint Peter and James Cathedral in downtown Cincinnati.
Thomas Kennealy: 37:52 Is it on exhibit? People could see it?

Barbara Trauth: 37:54 You have to ask to go into that museum, but you can go back and there’s a lot of things that are in that museum that are very interesting.

Thomas Kennealy: 38:02 Yes, yes. Well, that sounds very interesting too. So your reputation is international? All the way to Japan.

Barbara Trauth: 38:10 Well, I would hope. But the one thing that I forgot to point out was that I think the thing that struck me the most about the dropping of the bomb, and this was on a personal level, was that my father had signed up for the ground war in Japan, and he would not have survived.

Thomas Kennealy: 38:31 No, probably not.

Barbara Trauth: 38:33 And so-

Thomas Kennealy: 38:34 Sobering. Yes, it is.

Barbara Trauth: 38:36 So I wouldn't be here. There's a lot of people who wouldn't be here. It saved a lot of people's lives even though it did kill a lot of people, but so I guess my point of the sculpture and the message is for peace. That we never want another nuclear holocaust in the world, and so that is my hope with the image of this sculpture.

Thomas Kennealy: 39:00 And may that wish come to pass.

Barbara Trauth: 39:03 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 39:04 But the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and especially the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City inspired another one of your sculptures that I like to talk about. I think it's called With Arms Wide Open. Tell us about that and how did it, well, we know why it came about but maybe tell us about the work itself.

Barbara Trauth: 39:26 Well I'm sure everybody is familiar with those first images of the World Trade Center, the skeletal images of the pieces of the World Trade Center, the
destruction of it. Yes. And I was struck probably again by the work of the Holy Spirit that they were like arms opening up to all the people that dropped down, and then in my mind I saw the image of the suffering Christ on the cross with his arms outstretched. And so what I did was I was able to do that image of Christ on the cross, and his arms outstretched absorbing unto Himself all of these victims of this particular holocaust. And the name actually, which I don't think I told you this before, but the name came to me from there was a song at the time that was a very popular song that was called With Arms Wide Open.

Thomas Kennealy: 40:35 Oh, all right. Okay.

Barbara Trauth: 40:36 And it was about a father holding his newborn child for the first time, and I just thought that that was very appropriate that God would take all of these victims to Himself and very consoling.

Thomas Kennealy: 40:50 So essentially Christ, the image of Christ is at the center as I understand and reaching out with his hands and embracing all of these victims of this disaster.

Barbara Trauth: 41:01 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 41:01 What a beautiful image. How large is that figure then?

Barbara Trauth: 41:05 Again, that is not a large figure. That is probably 20 inches by, it's more horizontal than vertical, by 15 or 20 inches. They aren't large pieces.

Thomas Kennealy: 41:20 What material is that made of?

Barbara Trauth: 41:21 That is metal and ceramic combined.

Thomas Kennealy: 41:24 Combined. Yes, yes. Good. Of all the things that you've done, all the pieces, of which one are the fondest or let me put it this way, the proudest? What's your favorite?

Barbara Trauth: 41:35 Well, there is a piece that I did that is actually at the Roesch Library, the Marian Library-
Thomas Kennealy: 41:47 Oh, the Marian Library.

Barbara Trauth: 41:49 The Roesch Gallery at University of Dayton, and it is an image of all the children of the world in their native dress dancing in a circle with an image of Christ in the circle with them dancing with them. And it comes from an image from the book, the book about the Messiah.


Barbara Trauth: 42:18 I don't know if I mentioned, but the name of that book is His Name Shall be Called Wonderful.

Thomas Kennealy: 42:23 Which is from the text...

Barbara Trauth: 42:26 Yes, from the text. And so there is an illustration in that book of all the children in their native dress dancing with-

Thomas Kennealy: 42:33 In the circle.

Barbara Trauth: 42:33 ... the Christ child. Yes. And so I took that image and I did it in a, it's actually a maquette, it's a three dimensional version of this with the hope someday of doing that life size somewhere. I don't know how. Maybe it's not going to happen. It's getting late. But that is in the permanent collection at the Roesch Library at University of Dayton.

Thomas Kennealy: 43:02 But it's appropriate. That's part of the Marian collection there?

Barbara Trauth: 43:05 Yes.

Thomas Kennealy: 43:06 They have a, they're noted for their library and other artifacts pertaining to the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that's an appropriate place for it. Right now, are you working on projects? You have anything...

Barbara Trauth: 43:19 Well, I just finished illustrating a children's book that a friend of mine, her daughter wrote, and so she asked me if I would illustrate it. So I spent the summer doing that, and I'm doing portraits right now, and it's my hope to do a few more sculptures. There's a few more sculptures in me somewhere.
Thomas Kennealy: 43:43 Your imagination.

Barbara Trauth: 43:45 Yes.


Barbara Trauth: 43:46 So yeah, that's what I've been doing.

Thomas Kennealy: 43:48 But it's clear that the work you've done with illustrating children's books, that seems to rank very high among your accomplishments as you see it. Is that true?

Barbara Trauth: 43:59 Yes, it touches my heart as a mother, and I've written, let's see, three children's books and illustrated them, and I was not really aggressive about getting them published, but with the advent of this book that I've illustrated for this young woman, it made me sort of be more interested in being a little bit more aggressive about getting these children's books published, not just for the enjoyment of my own children, but beyond that.

Thomas Kennealy: 44:35 Beyond that as well. Yep. Well, as we conclude, Barbara, are there any final thoughts that you'd like to add before we bring this discussion to an end?

Barbara Trauth: 44:44 Well, I would just like to thank you for inviting me to be here.

Thomas Kennealy: 45:13 It's been our privileged.

Barbara Trauth: 45:13 It's an honor. It's an honor to be here, and I'm so glad because it helped me to remember a lot of things that may be would have gone by the wayside that would have been lost to my memory or to history that I was able to remember and bring into the discussion, and so I just thank you so much for inviting me to be here.

Thomas Kennealy: 45:16 Well, I think it's been our honor and privilege.

Barbara Trauth: 45:16 Thank you very much. It was mine too.

Thomas Kennealy: 45:16 And this has been a wonderful discussion and obviously you've enjoyed it almost as much as we
have. Thanks. And God bless you. Keep up the good work.

Barbara Trauth: 45:24 Thank you.

Thomas Kennealy: 45:24 Okay.

End of interview

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