



Bl. Marianna Biernacka

Born: 1888 in Lipsk, Podlaskie, Poland as Marianna Czokala

Died: shot by firing squad on 13 June 1943 in Naumovichi (a.k.a. Naumowicze), Hrodzyenskaya voblasts', Belarus

Beatified: 13 June 1999 by Pope John Paul II

Feast Day: 13 June

Lifelong lay woman in the diocese of Lomza, Poland. She had little education; she may have been able to read a little, but she could not write. Raised in the Orthodox church, she converted to Catholicism at age 17. Married to Ludwik Biernacki, a farmer, at age 20. Mother of six, only two of whom survived infancy, her daughter Leokadia, and her son Stanislaw. Widowed, she moved in with Stanislaw and helped raise her grandchildren, in part by setting an example of personal piety.

When the Nazis and Soviets divided Poland between them in World War II, Marianne's town came under German control. When local resistance groups did anything to fight back against occupying forces, the Nazis would have reprisal executions, rounding up random citizens and killing them as a warning to the resistance. On 1 June 1943 the Nazis arrested Marianna's son Stanislaw and his wife Anna, who was pregnant, and put them in the group to be murdered. Marianna pleaded to take the girl's place, and Anna was freed; Marianna asked to take one thing with her - a rosary. The mother and son were briefly imprisoned and then executed. Martyr.