

Bl. Maria Crescencia Perez
(Argentina/Chile) 1897-1932, In corrupt
Worked with sick children in tuberculosis hospital in Argentina.
Also served in a hospital in Chile.¹
Daughter of Our Lady of the Garden founded
by St. Anthony Gianelli in 1829



Maria Angelica Perez was born on August 17, 1897, in San Martin, Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Augustin Perez and Ema Rodriguez, immigrants from Spanish Galicia. She was the fifth of their eleven children. She was raised on a farm and helped her parents with the farm work. Her family was a religious one and had the custom of praying the rosary together each day. Maria Angelica was known to be pious. Maria Angelica studied at “Hogar de Jesus”, “House of Jesus” in Pergamino and earned a degree as a craft teacher from this school.

Maria entered the novitiate of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Garden on December 31, 1915, in Buenos Aires. She received the holy habit and her religious name, Sister Maria Crescencia, when she professed her vows on September 2, 1918. Soon after, her father died.

Sister M. Crescencia initially taught crafts and was a catechist in various schools, including at Colegio del Huerto in Buenos Aires. From 1924-1928 she worked in a tuberculosis hospital in Mar del Plata (Maritime Sanatorium), with children suffering from tuberculosis of the bone. When her own health began to suffer, her superiors moved her to a place where the weather would help her recover. She was moved to their religious house in Vallenar, Republic of Chile. There she assisted at a local hospital. She was loved by her patients because of her joyful spirit and the comfort she gave.² She was known as “Sister Sweetness.”³ Blessed Maria Angelica Perez had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and experienced visions and mystical union with Jesus.⁴

In 1928, Sister Maria Crescencia visited Pergamino for the last time to say goodbye to her family forever. Returning to Chile with the Provincial Superior, before long, she herself began to need medical attention. She spent 3 months in the hospital in isolation to protect her from potential infection.⁵ She then spent the last weeks of her life in her community with the Sisters assisting her and she them, with her serenity and deep inner peace. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Garden chronicles the events surrounding Sister M. Crescencia’s death:

God had reserved a very special grace for this moment. According to the chronicles, she received in a vision, the visit of the Founder, San Antonio Gianelli [1789-1846]. From the image of the painting of Our Lady of the Garden that was next to her bed, the Blessed Virgin Mary blessed her and the Sisters. Baby Jesus made a move to leave the arms of His Mother and Maria Crescencia extended hers to receive Him.

With true piety she received the Holy Viaticum, surrounded by her Superiors and Sisters. While she prayed the prayers of the dying with those present, she sat up and bowed deeply before the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, repeated the words that Jesus Himself taught her: **“Heart of Jesus, for the sufferings of Your divine heart, have mercy on us.”**

Then she broke into a fervent prayer: *“Heart of Jesus bless me and bless my Sisters; give them strength to fight with courage and seek the salvation of souls in these difficult times. Bless our Institute, from which I received so much good and in which, in these moments, I consider myself the happiest creature in the world. I ask You Most Holy Heart of Jesus that You send many and good vocation to our Institute, Oh Heart of Jesus, I ask You a special blessing for Chile and*

since it is Your will that I die here happy, I offer You this sacrifice for the peace and tranquillity of this nation.”

It seemed that the Heart of Jesus made her see the prize that He had prepared for her because she continued, “*When, Lord, have I deserved that? What are the sufferings of this world compared to the happiness of heaven? I am no more than a miserable creature, the smallest of all, I am less than a worm of the earth, where did I come from so much happiness? Heart of Jesus I do not deserve all that. Everything is the work of Your Heart, Jesus. I would like to love you as much as you love Yourself.*”

Her desire to join Jesus was vehement, so she exclaimed “*Do not stop me anymore...Do not stop me anymore... Yes, let all go to the Most Holy Heart of Jesus, there you will find the salvation of your soul.*” Finally she said smiling, “*Father...into your hands I entrust my spirit.*” Thus she died saintly, on May 20, 1932.

Shortly after her death at “Colegio del Huerto” in Quillota, 600 km distant from Vallenar, the Sisters together perceive a fragrance similar to the perfume of violets, which remained several days within the walls of the school. Because of this inexplicable fact, the Superior said, “*Sister Crescencia has died.*” Immediately a telegram arrived announcing her death.”⁶

Blessed Maria Angelica Perez (Sister Crescencia) died on May 20, 1932, at age 34 in Vallenar, Atacama, Chile from lung disease. The local community was already so attached to their “little saint,” as they called her, that even when the congregation left Vallenar, the community would not allow her body to be taken away. It remained in Vallenar, Chile for 35 years. On November 8, 1966, it was decided to transfer her body to Quillota. When the coffin was opened, her body and habit were perfectly preserved and almost intact. She then rested in the convent crypt in Quillota for 17 years. In 1983, her remains were reinterred in the College Chapel, the Church of the Sisters, in Juerto de Pergamino, Argentina. In 1986 she was transferred again, this time to the Chapel of Our Lady of the Garden school.

She was declared venerable with the promulgation of the decree on heroic virtues on June 22, 2004, by Pope St. John Paul II and beatified on November 17, 2012,⁷ by Pope Benedict XVI. Her beatification miracle involved the cure of a person from type A hepatitis. The beatification ceremony was officiated by Angelo Cardinal Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, at Pergamino, Argentina. Patron of Nurses.

(Memorial: May 20).

*Heart of Jesus, by the suffering of Your Sacred Heart,
have mercy on us!⁸*

Prayer for the canonization of Blessed Maria Angelica Perez:

*Father of Jesus and our Father,
through Your Divine Spirit
You make holiness flourish in Your Church.
We give You thanks for Blessed María Crescencia Pérez
who loved You with simplicity.
Her example and intercession,
may serve to extend Your Kingdom and to
increase vocations to the religious life.
We humbly implore You, that through her intercession
we might be granted the grace for which we ask
(Express your petition)
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

Please communicate any favors received to: Sister Josefina, Av. Independencia 2140, zip code 1225 - Buenos Aires - Argentina - or to any House of the Sisters of the Garden.⁹ vocationfmh@gmail.com.

References:

- 1) "Blessed María Angélica Pérez". CatholicSaints.Info. 10 November 2019. Web. 8 December 2021. <<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-maria-angelica-perez/>>
- 2) Brother Silas Henderson, SDS. (10 April 2022). Blessed Maria Angelica Perez. Aleteia. <https://aleteia.org/daily-prayer/monday-may-20/>. Accessed 10 April 2022.
- 3) Born Glorious. Maria Angelica Perez. Accessed 10 April 2022. <https://www.bornglorious.com/person/?pi=5790827>
- 4) Ana St. Paul (20May2020). Saint of the Day-20May-Blessed Maria Crescencia Perez FMH (1897-1932) "Sister Sweetness." Accessed 11 April 2022. <https://anastpaul.com/?s=Blessed+Maria+Crescencia>
- 5) Zyciorysy.info. Blessed Maria Angelika Perez. Accessed 11 April 2022. <https://zyciorysy.info/bl-angelika/>
- 6) Sisters FMH. Bl. Maria Crescencia Perez. Accessed 11 April 2022. <https://sistersfmh.org/history/sr-maria-crescencia/>
- 7) Hagiography Circle: An Online Resource on Contemporary Hagiography. 1932. 7) Maria Angelica Perez. Accessed 10 April 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/year/1932.htm#Perez>
- 8) Daughters of Our Lady of the Garden. Bl. Maria Crescencia Perez. Accessed 11 April 2022. <https://sistersfmh.org/history/sr-maria-crescencia/>
- 9) Sister Maria Crescencia Perez. Accessed 10 April 2022. <http://www.oocities.org/sorcrescencia/oracion.htm>

Note: This biography is particularly for nursing students and nurses desiring to grow in holiness and follow His Holiness Pope Pius XI words to first and foremost bring the Christian supernatural, Christ to our patients. I hope the biographies and references will help you with your Nursing History courses. Source: Diana L. Ruzicka (2022). *The Book of Nurse Saints*. Available at www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka