

Bl. María Isabel López García (Sr. Mary of Peace)
(Spain) 1885-1936, Martyr
Sister of the Christian Doctrine.
Served as a cook and nurse.¹
Congregation of the Sisters of the Christian Doctrine



Maria Isabel Lopez Garcia (Sister Mary of Peace)² was born on August 12, 1885, in Turis, Valencia, Spain, to Pietro Lopez and Maria Garcia. She was educated in a boarding school by religious sisters from the Congregation of the Sisters of the Christian Doctrine, a religious order founded in 1880 by Mother Micaela Grau for the catechetical instruction and education of children. Maria Isabel joined the congregation in 1911 at the age of 26. Though most of the sister were teachers, Isabel, who took the religious name, Sister Mary of Peace, served as a nurse and a cook.

At the beginning of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), many religious communities were dispersed due to great animosity towards religion. Mother Angeles of San Jose, the superior general of the Sisters of the Congregation of the Christian Doctrine, gathered into an apartment all those who had no family or friends to host them.³ There were 15 religious sisters living in semi-clandestine conditions

and spending time in prayer and a small apostolate. They actually spent their last months sewing garments for those who would end their lives. The sister lived in fraternal charity and discovered how persecution, poverty and suffering are also ways that lead to God.

Often the militiamen would come to look for them. On the evening of November 19, 1936, a van came to pick them up for their last trip. They left the house praying, encouraging and forgiving each other. They were driven to the Paterna riding school, about six kilometers from Valencia. There, at 1 a.m. on November 20, 1936, they were shot while uttering words of forgiveness. The last to be killed was Mother Mary Suffrage, crying, "Long live Christ the King!" on behalf of the others.

And so, the nurse, Sister Mary of Peace, was shot and killed for her faith on November 20, 1936, in Picadero de Paterna, Valencia, Spain, along with 14 other sisters.

A total of 17 sisters from the congregation were shot and killed. They are:^{2 5}

Killed on the night between September 26-27, 1936, near Barranco de los Perros, near Llosa de Ranes (Valencia):

- 1) Mother Maria del Rifugio (Teresa Rosat Balasch)
- 2) Sister Maria del Calvario (Josefa Romero Clariana)

Killed on November 20, 1936, at 1 a.m. at the Paterna riding school in Picadero de Paterna, Valencia, Spain:

- 3) Superior General Mother Angela di San Giuseppe (Francesca Desamparados Honorata Lloret Marti)
- 4) Mother Maria Del Suffragio (Maria Antoniadel Sufragio Orts Baldo)
- 5) Mother Mary of Montserrat (Maria Dolores Llimona Planas)
- 6) Sister Teresa of Saint Joseph (Ascension Duart y Roig)
- 7) Mother Isabel Ferrer Sabria
- 8) Sister Maria of the Assumption (Josefa Mongoche Homs)
- 9) Sister Maria della Concezione (Emilia Marti Lacal)
- 10) Sister Maria Grazia (Paula de San Antonio)
- 11) Sister Maria of the Sacred Heart (Maria Purificacion Gomes Vives)
- 12) Sister Maria del Soccorso (Teresa Jimenez Baldovi)
- 13) Sister Maria de los Dolores (Gertrudis Suris Brusola)
- 14) Sr. Ignazia of the Blessed Sacrament (Josefa Pascual Pallardo)
- 15) Sister Maria del Rosario (Catalina Calpe Ibanez)
- 16) Sister Mary of Peace (Isabel Lopez Garcia)
- 17) Sister Marcella of St. Thomas (Aurea Navarro)

The diocesan information gathering process began on July 5, 1965, in the Diocese of Valencia and ended on June 1, 1969. Towards the end of this process, on December 12, 1968, the remains of Sister Mary of Peace and the fourteen other sisters were exhumed and placed in a funeral monument in the church of the Mother House. It was not until 1983 that the remains of the first two sisters killed were located.

The sisters were declared venerable by the decree martyrdom promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II on July 6, 1993. The 17 Sisters of the Christian Doctrine were beatified by His Holiness Pope St. John Paul II on October 1, 1995⁴, in a group of 45 martyrs who died during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), together with 64 victims of the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the Piarist Father Pietro Casani. (Memorial - November 20).

“Lord, make me worthy to be a martyr for Your sake.”

References:

- 1) “Blessed María Isabel López García”. CatholicSaints.Info. 1 May 2022. Web. 6 June 2022. <https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-maria-isabel-lopez-garcia/>
- 2) Blessed Angela of San Giuseppe (Francesca Onorata Lloret Marti) and 14 companions, Virgins and martyrs. Accessed 6 June 2022. <http://santiebeati.it/dettaglio/78590>
- 3) Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi. Angeles de San Jose and 16 companions. Accessed 6 June 2022. <http://www.causesanti.va/it/santi-e-beati/angeles-de-san-jose-e-16-compagne.html>
- 4) Hagiography Circle: Martyrs of the Religious Persecution during the Spanish Civil War (1934, 1936-1939). Accessed 6 June 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/martyrs/MSPC02.htm>
- 5) Martyrs of the Religious Persecution during the Spanish Civil War ~ (1934, 1936-39) [2]. Accessed 18 August 2025. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/martyrs/MSPC02.htm>

Note: This biography is for all desiring to grow in holiness and follow His Holiness Pope Pius XI address to 2000 nurses assembled at Castel Gondolfo on August 27, 1935 for the II World Congress of Catholic Nurses (www.ciciams.org / www.nacn-usa.org): *to first and foremost bring the Christian supernatural, Christ to our patients, bring salvation to souls.* May it also help nursing students with your Nursing History course. Source: Diana L. Ruzicka (2022). *The Book of Nurse Saints*. Available at www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka