

Bl. Vicenta Achurra Gogenola (Sr. Daniela of San Barnaba)

(Spain) 1890-1936, Martyr

Worked at the Las Corts mental hospital,

Badalona asylum,

the Amparo de Santa Lucia house for the blind

and provided home care for the sick.¹

Carmelite Missionary Sister



Vicenta Achurra Gogenola was born on April 4, 1890, in Berriatua in Biscay, Spain. She was the last of six children born in a poor and deeply religious family. She was baptized in the parish Church of St. Peter on April 5, 1890.

When Vicenta was twenty five, she chose to consecrate herself to God as a Carmelite Missionary Sister. Her novitiate began in 1915 at the Mother House in Gracia, Barcelona, Spain. She made her first profession on October 16, 1916, taking the name Sister Daniela of San Barnaba. She made her final profession on October 17, 1921.

She was first assigned to minister in the communities of Las Corts, the diocesan seminary, and the asylum of Badalona in Barcelona. She also cared for the blind people at the Hospice of Santa Lucia in Barcelona. Just prior to the Spanish Civil War, she returned to the Mother House in Gracia to give care to a sick person in their home along with Sister Gabriella.

Sister Daniela was known to be happy, industrious, friendly and particularly devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. She had a great sense of humor but was also known to react abruptly when anxious, for which she always apologized. Her patients were particularly fond of her. One in particular initially refused her care. However, after a week, he refused to have anyone replace her.

In January 1935, Sister Daniela returned to Berriatua to care for her dying mother. She was subsequently tasked to accompany nine young postulants on a long journey from Zaragoza to Barcelona. On the way, they prayed, she taught them some religious songs and addressed their fears due to the complicated political situation in Spain and Barcelona, stating, “Even if we are martyrs, it doesn’t matter.” This mission completed, Sister Daniela returned to the Mother House where she resided while she provided care to the blind at Hospice of Santa Lucia and home care for the sick.

For a few months, Sister Daniela and Sister Gabriella of San Giovanni della Croce took turns caring for the same sick person in Pedralbes. They traveled by tram, Monday through Saturday, even after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War on July 18, 1936.

On July 31, 1936, the family of the sick person told the sisters that it was too dangerous to return to the convent in Gracia. A niece of Sister Gabriella, who worked at a local pharmacy of Messrs. Boque, offered a hiding place in her apartment. They tried to disguise themselves as they scurried to the apartment but were recognized as religious by a patrol of militiamen.

“The concierge of the Boque house, who was waiting for them, saw that they were captured, insulted and pushed into a pickup truck. Monsieur Boque had an employee of the pharmacy chase the vehicle, but all was in vain. Shortly thereafter the nuns were shot outside the city, on the L’Arrabassada highway in Barcelona, Spain.”²

Sister Daniela was 46 years old and had been a Carmelite missionary for 20 years. They, along with the bodies of two other sisters from their congregation, Sister Speranza della Croce and Sister Maria Rifugio di Sant' Angel, who had also been shot and killed, were buried in a mass grave.

The four Carmelite Missionaries were included in the cause for canonization that included 64 alleged martyrs: in addition to the 4 Carmelites, 44 Brothers of the Christian Schools, 14 Discalced Carmelites, 1 Carmelite Sister of Charity and a seminarian. All were declared venerable by decree of martyrdom promulgated on June 22, 2004, by His Holiness Pope St. John Paul II. She was beatified on October 28, 2007,³ by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. (Memorial - July 31)

Even if we are martyrs, it doesn't matter.

References:

- 1) "Blessed Vicenta Achurra Gogenola". CatholicSaints.Info. 31 July 2016. Web. 6 June 2022. <<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-vicenta-achurra-gogenola/>>
- 2) Santi Beati. Blessed Daniela of San Barnaba (Vicenta Achurra Gogenola, Virgin and Martyr. Accessed 6 June 2022. <http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/95705>
- 3) Hagiography Circle: Martyrs of the Religious Persecution during the Spanish Civil War (1934, 1936-1939) [22]. Accessed 6 June 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/martyrs/MSPC22.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