

Sister Agnes Mueller
(USA/Liberia) 1930-1992, Martyr
Nurse, spent 15 years in this ministry.
Adorers of the Blood of Christ
Killed by gunmen in Liberia



Agnes Mueller was born in 1930. She grew up during the Depression, the fifth of nine children. From the family home, it was an easy walk to the Adorers' residence at their parish school in Bartelso. She visited frequently so no one was surprised when Agnes said she wanted to become a sister. She yearned to become a missionary and wondered if the Adorers could provide that opportunity.

Agnes joined anyway and became a nurse, spending 15 years in the ministry. But it wasn't enough. She hungered for more and kept searching. She studied theology, did parish work, and cared for her aging mother.

Six months after her mom's death, in 1987, she left for Liberia. She found her most fulfilling ministry there, helping Liberian women become more financially independent and bringing them more fully into the church. She started with the basics, teaching them to read. She taught other classes, worked in a clinic and met with young women interested in spirituality. She was shot to death with two of her sisters on October 23, 1992, outside of the sisters' residence in Gardnersville, Liberia. She was 62.

Martyrs of Charity - Adorers of the Blood of Christ - 1992

In 1969, a priest, after being turned down by several other religious orders, invited the provincial leader of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ in Ruma, Illinois, to work in Liberia, West Africa. The community agreed, and the first group of sisters departed for Liberia in 1971. They staffed schools, parishes, clinics and hospitals. The sisters loved the people and served there for more than twenty years, despite the civil unrest and other challenges. In 1991, the Liberian Civil War made daily life increasingly dangerous so the five sisters based in Liberia returned to the United States due to safety concerns. A year later they decided to return.



On October 20, 1992, **Sister Barbara Ann Muttra** and **Sister Mary Joel Kolmer** were ambushed and killed by gunmen along a dirt road they traveled to return a worker to his home. Three days later, on October 23, soldiers shot and killed **Sisters Kathleen McGuire, Agnes Mueller** and **Shirley Kolmer** in front of their convent in Gardnersville. The other occupants of the house notified the bishop in Bonga, Bomi County, Liberia. It was not until October 31, 1992, that the sisters in Ruma, Illinois received notification. At that time, their mission in Liberia abruptly ended.

Authorities investigated their killing. His Holiness Pope St. John Paul II declared the five Martyrs of Charity. The Sisters erected a sculpture of the martyrs in Ruma, Illinois. In Liberia, clinics, schools and babies were named for the Martyrs of Charity. These five sisters committed their lives to charitable works in Liberia. All gave generously. Below is a brief summary of information on the two who were nurses:

References:

- 1) Adorers of the Blood of Christ, United States Region. Martyrs of Charity. <https://adorers.org/about-us/history/martyrs/> Accessed 5 June 2022.
- 2) Hagiography Circle: Liberia. Accessed 5 June 2022.
http://newsaints.faithweb.com/new_martyrs/Liberia.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