

**Anna Sonsalla (Sr. Maria Herais, OSF)  
(Poland) 1892-1945, Martyr**

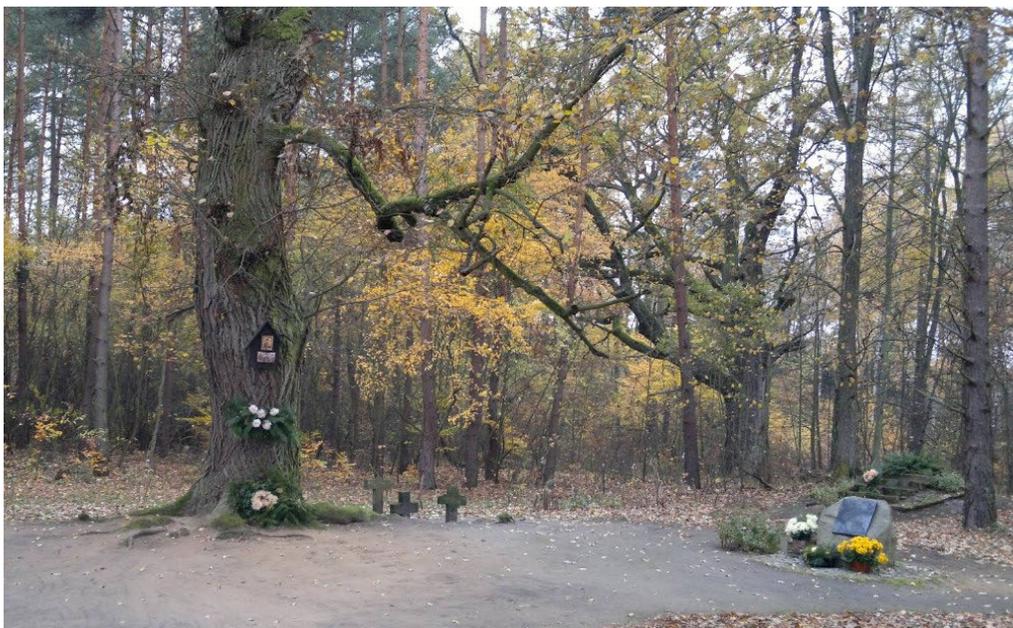
*Certified Nurse, Caretaker Sanct Anna Stift Nursing Home  
Congregation of Nursing Sisters of the  
Third Order Regular of Saint Francis (Hospitaller Franciscan - OSF)  
Burned alive by Russian forces with 16 charges including 4 children*



**Anna Sonsalla** was born on 27 February 1892 in Dobrzeń Wielki, Opole (Poland). She joined the Congregation of Nursing Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis (Hospitaller Franciscan - OSF) as a postulant in Münster on April 26, 1916.<sup>3</sup> She completed her education at the nursing school in Münster and passed the nursing diploma examination on May 18, 1922.<sup>3</sup> Sister Maria Herais made her perpetual vows on October 24, 1924. From 1936-1945, she lived in the religious house in Pokoju near Opole and served as the caretaker and nurse of the “Sanct Anna Stift” nursing home.

During the Russian winter offensive in 1945, when it became clear that the Russians were winning and the front was getting closer, on January 21, 1945, she moved her charges from the old people’s home to a wooden barn (or rather a brick house) in the forest. She hid there for over 3 weeks until a group of Russians discovered them in the forest. The surprised Russians poured gasoline over the walls of the barn and set her on fire. She was burned alive with 16 charges, including 4 children.

Sister Maria Herais died with her charges on February 16, 1945 in Pokój, Namysłów (Poland). A memorial marker stands at okolice stawu Zofii, DW454, 46-034, Poland outside Pokój.





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## References:

- 1) Hagiography Circle: Poland. Anna Sonsalla (Maria Herais). [http://newsaints.faithweb.com/new\\_martyrs/Poland2.htm](http://newsaints.faithweb.com/new_martyrs/Poland2.htm). Accessed 5 June 2022.
- 2) St. Zygmunt Roman Catholic Parish. White Book. Martyrdom of the Clergy 1914-1989. Anna Sonsalla (Sister Maria Herais). <http://www.swzygmunt.knc.pl/MARTYROLOGIUM/POLISHRELIGIOUS/vPOLISH/HTMS/POLISHRELIGIOUSmartyr2537.htm>. Accessed 5 June 2022. religious, Hospital Sisters of Saint Francis
- 3) Verbal communication with Piotr, resident of Pokój, January 30, 2026.
- 4) Additional References provided by Piotr, resident of Pokój:  
[https://www.google.com/maps/place/g%C5%82az+pami%C4%85tkowy/@50.8916078,17.8224431,15z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x471046c508ca068d:0xc36e47f40720a0ba!8m2!3d50.8912991!4d17.8262937!16s%2Fg%2F11c1wznr4?entry=ttu&g\\_ep=EgoyMDI1MTIwMi4wIKXMDS0ASAFQAw%3D%3D](https://www.google.com/maps/place/g%C5%82az+pami%C4%85tkowy/@50.8916078,17.8224431,15z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x471046c508ca068d:0xc36e47f40720a0ba!8m2!3d50.8912991!4d17.8262937!16s%2Fg%2F11c1wznr4?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MTIwMi4wIKXMDS0ASAFQAw%3D%3D)  
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<https://lenartpawel.pl/stary-dab-szypulkowy-w-okolicach-stawu-zofii-w-pokoju.html>  
<https://opowiecie.info/wielcy-ludzi-stad-siostra-herais/>

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](http://www.ciciams.org) / [www.nacn-usa.org](http://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](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka)