

**Zofia Luszczkiewicz (Sr. Izabela)
(Poland) 1898-1957**

*Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Krakow.
Studied nursing at the College of Nursing in Paris-1926
Nurse during the Bolshevik War, Soviet Invasion of Poland,
World War II and the Soviet Occupation of Poland.
Participated with Polish Underground during Soviet Occupation
Arrested, tortured, death & life sentence commuted, released
conditionally in 1956 and died at Motherhouse in 1957*



Zofia Luszczkiewicz was born on April 23, 1898, in Krakow, Poland, the first child of Michal and Kazimiera nee Lakocinski. Her father was an attorney.

She served as a volunteer nurse during the Polish-Bolshevik War (1919-1920).

In 1923, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Krakow. Her postulant year was in the house of St. Kazimierz in Lviv. She received the habit and took the name Sister Izabela. She attended the novitiate at the Mother House in Paris, from September 3, 1923, to August 30, 1924. She studied nursing at the College of Nursing in Paris in 1926. Sister Izabela was fluent in French, German, English and Latin.

Sister Izabela served as the Headmistress of the School of Nursing at the Lviv General Hospital. She collaborated extensively with the school in Paris to improve the nursing education standard in Lviv. She attended nurses' meetings in various countries: Paris 1937, London, Vienna, Vilnius, New York-1939. Sister Izabela even obtained a cinema operator's license in USA & purchased film equipment using audiovisual aids to assist with occupational therapy. She was an amateur photographer and had driver's license to drive both a car and truck. Sister Izabela had a beautiful voice which enriched the liturgy. She also played piano.

She traveled to the United States for an internship which she shortened due to the threat of World War II. After the Soviets invaded Poland, she was sought after by NKVD (Soviet security service). During World War II (1938-1945), Sister Izabela cooperated with Home Army and Peasants' Battalions as an emissary, monitored radio stations, delivered weapons and aided in hiding Jews. Once she was rescued from the Nazi Gestapo by Poland's national resistance.

Following the war, during the Soviet occupation, she cooperated with WiN (Wolnosc i Niezawislosc = Freedom and Independence), a Polish Underground which operated between 1944-1963.² She was arrested and persecuted under the communists. She lost three front teeth under torture; refused to speak against Church leaders; was forced to spend nights naked and doused with water in her prison cell; and threatened to be killed each night. Eventually her death sentence was commuted to life in prison.

In 1956, she was released conditionally due to poor health. She was ill with tuberculosis of the bone and suffered a tumor in the jaw. Sister Izabela died on August 8, 1957, at the provincial house in Krakow, Poland. She was buried in the tomb of the Sisters of Mercy in Rakowicki Cemetery.

On December 12, 1993, the Provincial Court in Warsaw overturned the convictions of 1949-1950 and ruled that the activities of Sr. Izabela were a fight for the independent existence of the Polish State.³

References

- 1) Hagiography Circle: An Online Resource on Contemporary Hagiography. Poland. Accessed 15 April 2022. http://newsaints.faithweb.com/new_martyrs/Poland2.htm
- 2) Freedom and Independence - Wolność i Niezawisłość, WiN: Polish Underground Societers 1944-1963 - The Untold Story. Accessed 11 April 2022. <https://freedomandindependence.com/>
- 3) Muzeum Pielęgniarstwa Polskiego. Sr. Izabela Zofia Luszczykiewicz 1898-1957. Accessed 15 May 2022. <http://www.wmpp.org.pl/pl/wzorce-osobowe/%C5%82uszczykiewicz-izabela-zofia-s.html>

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