

**St. Maria de Jesus Sacramentado Venegas de la Torre
(Mexico) 1868-1959**

*Daughter of the Sacred Heart of Jesus dedicated to
the care of the sick, elderly and abandoned.*

*For 54 years cared for the poor and sick in the small
Sacred Heart hospital in Guadalajara, Mexico.*

*As the Congregation's leader for 35 years opened hospitals and clinics.
Kept Sacred Heart hospital open during the repression of Catholicism and
persecution during the Cristero War caring for both soldiers and Cristeros.¹
1st canonized Mexican saint.*



Maria Natividad Venegas de la Torres served as a nurse, Religious Sister and founder of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Guadalajara, who took the name of *Maria of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament*.

She was born into a pious Bible-reading, rosary-praying family on September 8, 1868, in La Taponá, Zapotlanejo, Jalisco, Mexico. She was the youngest of 12. Her mother died when she was 16 and her father when she was 19. She was raised by her paternal uncle and aunt. At age 30, on December 8, 1898, she joined the Association of the Daughters of Mary, was active in parish life and taught local children to read. Maria Natividad grew in her interior life, had a great love for Jesus in the Eucharist and attended the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass daily.

She discerned a religious calling at age 37. She was invited by her spiritual director to participate in Spiritual Exercises in the city of Guadalajara. There in 1905 she joined a small community of young ladies dedicated to the care of the sick in the Sacred Heart Hospital. She practiced as a nurse with self-denial, was helpful and exquisitely charitable; she distinguished herself for her humility, simplicity for affable ways with her sisters, the sick and people in general. She had a particular way of dealing with bishops and priests in which she saw the continuation of Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest.²

She worked the next 54 years with the poor and sick in the small Sacred Heart hospital in Guadalajara, Mexico serving as a nurse, pharmacist, housekeeper and the community's accountant and hospital's bookkeeper. On January 25, 1921, she was appointed the Superior General of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She is considered the founder of the Congregation having written the formal constitution of the Order in 1924 and obtained diocesan approval in 1930. With the diocesan approval of the constitution, she made her Perpetual vows, taking the name Mary of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. During the 35 years that she served as the leader of the congregation, they increased vocations, opened hospitals and clinics and founded several houses.

In 1926, President Plutarco Elias Calles began enforcing anti-clerical laws, seizing Church property, shutting down Church institutions including schools, hospitals, orphanages and homes for the elderly. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was prohibited, religious education outlawed, and all bishops were exiled from Mexico; this persecution started the Cristero War (1926-1928). Mother Natividad managed to keep Sacred Heart hospital open during the repression; when Soldiers arrived to close it down, she overwhelmed them with kindness. She and her sisters treated both Soldiers and Cristeros, so the military held off enforcing the order to

shut her down. Mother Natividad insisted that the Eucharist not be removed from the hospital, and to prevent the Soldiers from committing sacrilege, it was often hidden in bee hives on their property.

Mother Nati continued working with the patients until her last days, even when she had to get around in a wheelchair. Her final, bed-ridden days were spent in prayer for them, her hospital and her sisters. She is the first canonized Mexican saint.

Miracle: her canonization miracle involved the healing of Anastasio Ledezma Mora whose heart stopped during surgery, who went into a coma following resuscitation, and was healed following the prayers by the family for the intercession of Mother Nati.¹

Mother Nati was declared venerable by decree of heroic virtue on May 13, 1989. She was beatified on November 22, 1992, and canonized on May 21, 2000³ at St Peter's Square in Rome both by Pope St. John Paul II.⁴ (Memorial - July 30)

Reference:

- 1) "Saint María Natividad Venegas de La Torre". CatholicSaints.Info. 4 July 2021. Web. 8 December 2021. <<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-maria-natividad-venegas-de-la-torre/>>
- 2) Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Maria de Jesus Sacramentado Venegas de la Torre. Accessed 16 May 2022. <http://www.causesanti.va/it/santi-e-beati/maria-de-jesus-sacramentado-venegas-de-la-torre.html>
- 3) Hagiography Circle. Accessed 31 May 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/year/1959.htm>
- 4) "The List of Popes." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. 31 May 2022 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12272b.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