

Venerable Anna Maria Sorti (Sr. Danielangela)

(Italy/Congo) 1947-1995, Martyr of Charity

Members of the Sisters of the Poor, Palazzolo Institute, composed mostly of experienced nurses, and founded in 1869 in Bergamo, Italy.

Nursing Training in Milan, Italy, 1970

Cared for the sick and poor Mosango General Hospital

Established a maternity ward in Kikimi, a suburb of Kinshasa

Head of the mission in Tumiki; Drove to Mosango to care for Sr. Floralba

Contracted Ebola died upon her return to Tumiki



Anna Maria Sorti (Sr. Danielangela) (1947-1995) was born on June 15, 1947, in Bergamo, Italy. She was the youngest of 13 children, seven of whom survived. Her mother and father died in 1956 and 1957 respectively. At age 10, she was left orphaned, grieved, and lost her faith, becoming a troubled teenager. Through the influence of the Sisters of the Poor (Poverelle Sisters), she reformed her life.

She desired to enter the order at age 18, but her brothers and sisters opposed. The age of majority was 21. They took her to court, but she prevailed due to her strong character and the support of her cousin and guardian Lucia Bacis. At age 19, Anna entered the convent and took the name Sister Danielangela in honor of her parents. She professed temporary vows on September 29, 1968. She was sent to Milan to study nursing and earned her diploma in 1970. She worked on via Palazzolo caring for the elderly. She made her perpetual vows in 1974.

Desiring a more contemplative life, she asked this of her superiors. Instead the Superior proposed that she go to Zaire where there was a greater need. On July 4, 1978, Sister Danielangela left for Mosango where she worked at the Hospital Center. She then moved to Kikimi, a suburb of Kinshasa, where she established a maternity ward so that women no longer gave birth in inhumane conditions. This she did in an area with no electricity or running water! In 1991, she was appointed head of the mission in Tumikia. She was concerned about the suffering of the people under the oppressive Mobutu regime. She did her best to help wherever she was needed.

She was nicknamed by the other sisters, “trappistina” for her contemplative ways. She led community prayers, participated in Eucharistic adoration, wearing her Sunday best to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In a letter dated March 23, 1995, she wrote, “Time passes quickly for everyone, and we must be prepared because we know neither the hour nor the day when the Lord will call us. Stay in joy, because love asks for love.”

In order to relieve other sisters already tired from previous vigils caring for Sister Floralba, Sister Danielangela drove to Mosango to look after the gravely ill Sister Floralba on the night of April 24, 1995. In addition to washing blood-soaked bandages, she cut herself on her finger with an injection vial. In the morning she returned to Tumikia. On May 1, she experienced chills, fever. She was hospitalized in Mosango and then transferred to Kikwit when ebola was suspected. Sister Danielangela died on May 11, 1995, in Kikwit, Kwilu, Zaire, one month before her 48th birthday.

Servant of God Sister Danielangela Sorti was declared venerable with the decree of heroic virtue on March 17, 2001, by Pope Francis.

*Time passes quickly for everyone,
and we must be prepared because we do not know the hour or the day
when the Lord will call us.”
Stay in joy because love asks for love.*

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**Martyrs of Charity - Nurse Victims of the Ebola Epidemic,
Democratic Republic of the Congo/Zaire (Italy) - 1995**

*Died of the Ebola virus contracted while caring for victims of the hemorrhagic fever
in Kikwit, Kwilu, Democratic Republic of Congo.*

*Members of the Sisters of the Poor, Palazzolo Institute, composed
mostly of experienced nurses, and founded in 1869 in Bergamo, Italy.*

In 1995, a very aggressive virus that causes a terrible hemorrhagic fever, Ebola, ravaged Zaire, taking the lives of six nurses, missionary sisters from the Congregation of Sister of the Poor, Palazzolo Institute between April 25 and May 28, 1995. The religious sisters contracted the disease in the hospital wards and operating room while providing nursing care to those infected by the virus. The terrible Ebola virus killed them, along with thousands of people in Africa. In Kikwit, it affected 220 people and 176 died. The Bishop of Bergamo, Msgr. Francesco Beschi, described these nurses as “martyrs of charity,” stating, “There is no greater love than giving

one’s life like Jesus.” They gave their lives to serve the sick and poor in the turbulent country known as the Belgian Congo (1908-1960), Democratic Republic of the Congo (1960-1971), Zaire (1971-1997) and again DRC (1997 to the present).

In May 1995, after caring for victims of Ebola, as they began to succumb to the deadly effects of the virus, the Sisters faxed the Mother General in Bergamo, Italy:

We understand your trepidation, but we are totally in God’s hands. No evacuation can be done. It is very hard for you and for us to accept this separation from the sisters. Painful events have overwhelmed us but the life of the Congregation must continue: the situation is quite dramatic, especially inside. But it is necessary to remain calm. In Kinshasa there are no outbreaks and all the roads towards the interior are blocked.¹



The United States of American Center for Disease Control and Prevention recorded the outbreak in a 1998 Emerging Infectious Disease letter.²

At the request of the Congregation, on April 28, 2013, Bishop Edouard Mununu, Bishop of Kikwit, initiated the Cause for Canonization of the six religious Sisters by opening the diocesan inquiry to ascertain their heroic virtues. Eight years later, Sister Floralba, Sister Clarangela, and Sister Dinarosa were declared venerable on February 20, 2021. And the next month, on March 17, 2021, Sister Danielangela, Sister Annelvira, and Sister Vitarosa were also declared venerable, all with the decree of heroic virtue³ promulgated by Pope Francis.

The remains of the six nurses, missionary, religious sisters, at the express request of the Bishop of Kikwit Monsignor Edouard Mununu, rest in front of the Cathedral of Kikwit.

Reference:

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- 2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Sep 1998). Unrecognized Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever at Mosango Hospital during the 1995 Epidemic in Kikwit, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Accessed 4 June 2022. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/4/3/98-0349_article
- 3) Hagiography Circle: Martyrs of Charity. Accessed 28 April 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/martyrs/Kikwit.htm>
http://newsaints.faithweb.com/news_archives_2021.htm
- 4) Aleteia. Accessed 28 April 2022. <https://aleteia.org/2021/03/23/6-heroic-nuns-who-fought-the-ebola-pandemic-and-are-on-their-way-to-sainthood/>
- 5) Santi Beati. Venerable Danielangela (Anna Maria) Sorti, Nun delle Poverelle. Accessed 4 June 2022. <http://santiebeati.it/dettaglio/97445>
- 6) "Venerable Anna Maria Sorti".CatholicSaints.Info. 27 June 2021. Web. 5 June 2022. <<https://catholicsaints.info/venerable-anna-maria-sorti/>>

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