

**Venerable Janina Woynarowska
(Poland) 1923-1979**

Highly respected nurse in Chrzanow.

*Helped abandoned and unwanted people, single mothers, their children
and the elderly, organized material and spiritual support.*

Organized retreats at the Marian Sanctuary in Pioki.

Visited poor families in their homes.

*Fortified for the strenuous work through daily participation
at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Eucharistic Adoration.*

*Appointed instructor and nurse supervisor, Dept. of Health and
Social Welfare in the Presidium of the County National Council in Chrzanow.*

Opened a home for unwed mothers.

Removed from leadership for stopping at a monastery with a patient.

*Active participant in the Synod of Pastoral Care
of the Archdiocese of Krakow (1972-1979).*

Member of the Secular Institute of Christ the Redeemer of Man.



Janina Woynarowska was born on May 10, 1923, in Piwniczna-Zroj, Nowy Sącz, Poland. Her mother died in the typhus epidemic and was buried in Istebna. As a child, Janina was adopted by Kazimierz Witold Strzemie-Woynarowski and Maria Jadwiga nee Twarog. Her foster father was a Colonel and physician. They lived at “white manor house” on Al. Henryka 24 in Chrzanow. The family was wealthy and charitable, giving meals, material and medical assistance to the poor. They were a religious and patriotic family. Though Janina suffered from progressive scoliosis, she had a lovely childhood composing poems, playing the piano, visiting with her cousin, Leszek, ice skating, and other childhood activities. Due to her health, she completed the first two years of primary school at home after which she attended primary school No. 3, near her house.

In 1936, she entered Michalina Moscicka, a private school for women, until schooling was interrupted on September 1, 1939, due to the outbreak of World War II. Her parents taught school in their home, for a time, which was also interrupted due to responsibilities in the home from which they were subsequently ordered to leave.

The family moved to an apartment at Krakowska Street and then to Al. Henryka 32. During the occupation, Janina was ordered to work digging anti-aircraft ditches. At the end of the war, the family returned to their devastated house where, on May 21, 1945, her foster father died.

Janina began working at the Obvodows Outpatient Clinic at ul Koniewa 19 (currently Zklad Lecznictwa Ambulatoryinego st ul Skola 19), as a junior hygienist. She was promoted to senior hygienist after 6 months. On June 26, 1946, she took a nursing oath and a year later completed an additional course for employees of the Social Insurance Institution. She was active at St. Nicholas Church, and coordinated the Living Rosary.

In 1950, Janina obtained the state certificate as a registered nurse. She was fortified for the strenuous nursing work through full daily participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and adoration of Jesus Christ on the Cross. She was known to visit the side chapel of St. Stanislaus,

the bishop, and lay on the cold floor with a cross and dialogued silently with Christ. In prayers before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, she presented matters that awaited her during that day.

She was a highly respected nurse in Chrzanow. She cared for both the sick individual's body and soul. She helped abandoned and unwanted people, single mothers with their children and the elderly. She organized material and spiritual help for those in her care. She kept herself abreast of new development in medicine and implemented these in practice as appropriate. She was always learning so that she could better care for her patients.

With the cooperation of priests, she organized retreats at the Marian Sanctuary in Pioki. She visited poor families in their homes bringing advice and help in the form of vouchers (so-called numbers) with which they could obtain basic food in the store. She arranged for tutors for children, and if they were not baptized, she often became their godmother. She prayed for the grace of conversion of her patients, and several returned to the Church after years of neglect.

The Ministry of Health awarded her "For exemplary work in the health services" on April 8, 1951. Two years later her foster mother died on July 2, 1953. She fainted during the funeral and was taken to the hospital. After she returned home to the empty house, she wrote a beautiful poem in memory of her mother:

*She did not give birth, but gave the Love,
which she enveloped a helpless, orphan being for ever.
She invited into her life, she shared her life -
watching day and night with the readiness of tender hands.
The light of serene glances was distracted by the fear
of a child's heart, which ...
sings a ceaseless song - Mateńko¹*

On January 13, 1955, she was awarded the 10th Anniversary Medal for merits in nursing work by the Minister of Health. Four days later, on January 17, she was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit for exemplary work in the Health Service. On January 1, 1956, she was nominated as the Head Nurse of the District Clinic in Chrzanow and the chairman of the Polish Nursing Society.

In 1961, she took annual vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, becoming a member of the Secular Institute of Christ the Redeemer of Man in Krakow. In 1964, she became the editor of *Ora et Labora*, the institute's bulletin. She was appointed to the position of instructor and nurse supervisor at the Department of Health and Social Welfare in the Presidium of the County National Council in Chrzanow. She worked with Fr. Zbigniew Monko to establish a home for unwed mothers at ul Skola 44. The entire ground floor of this building was donated by the Szurek-Lusinski family for this purpose. At the Adoption Center, she found foster parents for abandoned children. In 1966, she made her perpetual vows with the Secular Institute of Christ the Redeemer of Man in the presence of Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, Archbishop of Krakow and future Pope St. John Paul II, and Fr. Witold Kacz, founder of the Institute.

Unable to afford the upkeep of the family home, the next year, in 1967, she moved into an apartment with her cousin, Elzbieta Twarog-Rawicz at ul Grunwaldzka 13. After several awards and accomplishments noted above, in 1969, she was disciplined and released from her leadership position. She was permitted to work in the clinic treatment room for the next 10 years



until her death. What was her offense? She brought, at his request, a man who had a double amputation via ambulance to visit a monastery enroute to their final destination. The communist atheist authorities opposed this detour.

Janina's professional accomplishments were many. She wrote articles for the nursing professional magazine: *Sluzba Zdrowia i Zdrowie* (Nurse and Midwife). She participated in the International Congress of Secular Institutes in Rome. She was an active participant in the Synod of Pastoral Care of the Archdiocese of Krakow (1972-1979) where she met Blessed Hanna Chrzanowska, RN (the first lay Catholic Registered Nurse to be beatified on April 18, 2018, in Krakow). In 1979, she graduated with a master's degree in Psychology and Christian Philosophy. She founded the parish charity team at St. Mikolaja Church. She also worked as a social probation officer, worked at the Adoption Center and provided marital counseling. And she continued throughout her life to write beautiful poems, many of which were the fruit of her pious reflection. Many of her poems were published by her friend, Lucyna Szubel, in several volumes. She was also an active member of the Gronie Literary Group in Zywiec and was a prolific writer. Some of the most mature and valuable of her writings were: *Our Spirituality* (1971), *Reflections* (1971) and *An Outline of the Theology of Work* (1972).

Janina Woynarowska died on November 24, 1979, in a car accident. It was a rainy and snowy Saturday. She was driving from Bochinia to Chrzanow with Dr. Emilia Szurek-Lusinska near Krakow's Pasternik. The car skidded off the road and hit a roadside tree. Janina was buried in the parish cemetery in the plot of her adoptive parents in Chrzanow on November 29, 1979. Bishop Jan Pietraszko from Krakow and Fr. prelate Witold Kacz officiated. Fr. Prelate Witold Kacz, Archdiocesan Chaplain of the Sick in Krakow, delivered the sermon at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass funeral.²

The canonization process of the Venerable Servant of God Janina Woynarowska was opened on June 18, 1999, by Franciszek Cardinal Macharski and the nihil obstat issued by the Vatican on April 26, 1999. The diocesan inquiry began on June 18, 1999, and closed on April 24, 2002. The *Positio* was published in 2017. Janina was declared venerable by decree of heroic virtues on May 21, 2022 by His Holiness Pope Francis.^{4, 5, 6}

In Chrzanow, on the 24th of every month at 8 a.m. at the church of St. Nicholas, the memory of Servant of God Janina Woynarowska is celebrated with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the elevation of Janina to the Altar. Lamps are also lit on her grave and flowers placed there by those who faithfully remember her goodness of heart.¹

Prayer for beatification

*Lord Jesus, Redeemer of man,
Your Servant Janina Woynarowska
has always rushed to help the sick and the poor.
We beg you to help all those who suffer from pain and suffering
through her intercession,
and to teach us every day Christian love by her example.
Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Amen.¹*

Report any graces received to the vice postulator for the cause of the canonization of Servant of God Janina Woynarowska Vice-postulajca Sł. B. Janinie Woynarowskiej, ul. Kadłubka, 22 a/4, 32-500 Chrzanów, POLAND; Instytut Świecki Chrystusa Odkupiciela Człowieka, Pl. Mariacki, 5, 31-042 Krakow, POLAND

References:

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