

**Venerable Rozalia Celakowna
(Poland) 1901-1944**

Mystic

Worked at St. Lazarus Hospital on the skin and venereal disease ward.

Worked on night duty, prayed at bedside for the dying.

Loved her patients through her great love for Jesus.

Also employed at an outpatient clinic at beginning of WWII

where German doctors worked. Had to learn German.

Mission from Jesus: "If you want to save the world, you must enthrone the Sacred Heart of Jesus in all countries and nations of the world."



Venerable Rozalia Celakowna² (1901-1944) was born on September 19, 1901, in the village of Jachowka, Budzow, Sucha Beskidzka District, Poland, to Joanna and Tomasz Celakowna. She was the eldest of eight children and her parents were fervent Catholics.

The family worked hard on their farm and would pray together in the morning, at noon and in the evening, reciting the Holy Rosary and other prayers. They also regularly read the Holy Bible and the Lives of the Saints. They received the Sacrament of Reconciliation every month and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every Sunday and sometimes on weekdays, too. Rozalia wrote about her parents, *"From my earliest years, they inculcated into my soul the deep tenets of holy faith and the love of God and neighbor. They watched over my soul to guard it from any corruption. At home, I had never been set a bad example."* In her diary she records, *"The first teacher who taught me to love Jesus*

was my dear Mother. She instructed me about what Jesus had done for us, what we were to love Him for, how I was to behave so that He would like me, etc. (...) The piety of my parents could be seen above all in the keeping of God's Commandments; it was not some bizarre, warped piety but healthy and reasonable."

On September 1, 1908, just before she turned 7 years old, Rozalia began elementary school. She was a good student and set an example for other children. Rozalia made her First Holy Communion in 1911 at the age of 10 years old, at which time she declared, *"Dear Jesus, I want nothing else but love. I want to love You as much as is possible for any creature to love God. You, dear Jesus, nobody else!... I am asking you so ardently for nothing else but to keep me always from offending you with even but a shade of voluntary sin."* At this time, Rozalia experienced her first mystical experience. The Lord asked her: *"Give yourself to Me, entirely and without reservation, to My exclusive service and you will be very happy. The world can never give you happiness, but I, your God, will make you happy. Love me for the entire world! I will broaden your heart and fill it with love so that you can pay Me with love for love."*

After 6 years, Rozalia finished elementary school in 1914 at the age of 13. The outbreak of World War I (1914-1918) prevented her from continuing her education. She continued to help her parents on the farm with her younger brothers and sisters. She received the Sacrament of Confirmation in 1917, the same year that the Blessed Virgin Mary was appearing in Fatima, Portugal. Rozalia, herself, continued to have mystical experiences. In 1918, she took a private vow of chastity at her parish church.

In 1919, Rozalia experienced spiritual dryness and even darkness lasting six years. She experienced feeling of hopelessness and despair and spiritual attacks. She was very careful, however, never to neglect her prayers. During this time, she visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Jasna Gora, Poland, which houses the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary and infant Jesus painted by St. Luke. Following this pilgrimage she left the family home and moved to Krakow in 1924.

At the time, the spiritual attacks were at their worst, and her confessor was unable to help her because he did not understand her spiritual state. Like the children of Fatima, seven years earlier, in 1917, Rozalia was now given a vision of hell. She described, *"I felt like I was tumbling into the abyss of hell... Before my soul, horrible sins and crimes appeared, and it seemed that I had committed them... I heard a voice: 'You are damned and nothing can save you... I felt hell's fire on me, and it seemed to burn my body. The roaring and howling of devils was so piercing that no human mind can imagine.'"* She understood that, *"When God crucifies a soul in this way and leaves it in darkness, man is then helpless..."* She further stated, *"I saw an open hell, the horror of which I cannot describe."* She reported that the devils experienced satanic joy as they threw huge numbers of souls into the abyss of hell. They competed to see who could bring the most souls. They tormented each soul with the sins they had committed. Most were damned for sins against commandment six (Thou shalt not commit adultery) and nine (Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife), followed by the sins of murder and hatred. After this vision, Rozalia's soul was carried to heaven where she received a vision of the love and happiness therein. She "heard" an inner voice say, *"Sainthood is love. The soul will achieve supreme perfection when it comes to love God most passionately."*

Approximately 6 months after her arrival in Krakow, in April 1925, Rozalia began working at St. Lazarus Hospital on the skin and venereal disease ward. The prevalence of syphilis and other venereal diseases testified to a moral decline and the terrible consequences of violating the Sixth Commandment. The Primate Cardinal of Poland, August Hlond, prior to World War II, had said that the moral decline of mankind in the 20th century was worse than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus had told Rozalia, *"There is a need of sacrifice for Poland, for the sinful world. Great harm is done to my Sacred Heart by sins of impurity. I demand expiation."* Rozalia understood that Jesus was calling on her to carry his love and mercy to morally lost people suffering from venereal diseases. Rozalia provided care with great dedication to the patients with venereal disease, many of whom were forgotten by their families. Some were vulgar and exhibited wanton and lewd behavior which pained Rozalia. However, since she knew this was the work Jesus asked of her, she continued to serve the ill for the love of Jesus present in any suffering individual who was in need of her help.

During another mystical encounter, Jesus told Rozalia, *"I Am always with you and support you with My grace and stand by you. Although you cannot see Me now, you are to see Me with your soul's eyes and believe in this; for if I were not at your side, you would not be able to endure on your own under these conditions."*

Two years later at age 26, on December 15, 1927, Rozalia entered the convent of the Poor Clares, an order following the rule of St. Francis. Discovering that this was not her calling, she left the convent a couple months later, on March 1, 1928. She then began working in an eye clinic, a well-paid and prestigious position. However, she experienced another mystical vision in which Jesus was calling her back to the skin and venereal disease ward. While praying she saw Jesus being cruelly whipped by syphilitic female patients. They beat him mercilessly on the face and all over His body. Then, Jesus said to Rozalia: *"My dear child, look, what terrible suffering is inflicted upon Me by sins of impurity. Here, my child, I want to have you, to compensate Me for those horrible sins that harm My Heart so much... You, my child, will suffer a lot in your life"*

in order to console Me, to become like Me, and to save souls... Today, I uncover before you and let you know the mystery and value of suffering. Suffering offers so great a grace that it is hardly comprehensible. It is a greater grace than the gift of working miracles. I shall give you a love of suffering so that you will be able to suffer like Me.” In this mystical vision, Jesus took Rozalia to the edge of a “huge pit, full of rot and abomination.” Rozalia stated, “He indicated to me that it was a human heart soiled with a sin of impurity. Jesus told me to work there for the intention of those fallen souls, so that they might mend their ways, and to remember for the rest of my life that my work and life would come to a close there.”

While working at the venereal disease ward, Rozalia had to replace dressings, and clean rotting and stinking wounds. She worked on night duties and accompanied the dying. She said that if it had not been for her supernatural love of neighbor and the awareness that she was fulfilling God’s Will, she would not have undertaken such a taxing and wretched job for any amount of money.

Rozalia continued to love her patients through her great love for Jesus. She heroically overcame the disgust that rose up in her at the sight and manner of behavior of the syphilitic patients. She provided loving care, kindness and showed the patience of an angel as she cared for their needs. She was tender, modest and firm. She encouraged them to amend their lives and open their souls to Divine Mercy. She would often kneel down at a dying patient’s bedside and pray for their reformation and reconciliation with God through confession, right up until they died.

An acquaintance reported one instance they observed,

Once while on night duty, Rozalia could not persuade a certain middle-aged man to confess and receive Holy Communion before he died. She knelt down at his bed and started to recite the Rosary. After a few minutes, the man asked: ‘What are you doing?’ ‘*I’m praying,*’ she replied. ‘For whom?’ ‘*For you.*’ ‘For me? I’ve not asked you to,’ he said, then fell asleep. Having woken up, he saw her praying again, and asked: ‘Are you still praying for me?’ ‘*Yes!*’ At this, he frowned and said: ‘But I don’t wish you to,’ and fell asleep again. When he woke up for the third time and saw Rozalia kneeling, he asked: ‘Are you still praying for me despite my unpleasant words?’ To this, she replied: ‘*Yes! Because God’s goodness is so great that it embraces you too, in spite of the fact that you hold it in contempt.*’ Then, the man asked her to summon a priest; he confessed, received Holy Communion, and was given the Sacrament of the Sick. After two or three hours, he passed away in the early hours of the morning.

Rozalia did everything out of love for Jesus and the Virgin Mary. In addition to her work at the hospital, she continued studying to serve the sick better. She studied evenings and nights for her last exam in nursing, which she passed in 1933. As a registered nurse she received many offers for well-paid work, but continued to be faithful to her calling to care for the people suffering from venereal diseases.

In May 1937, at age 36, Rozalia experienced exceptional mystical encounters with Jesus Christ and a closer union with Him. She wrote, “*Jesus, although invisible, is present in my soul. I feel His presence by having an impression of two persons’ souls uniting into one as it were. This coming into contact by Jesus with my soul is far superior to an apparition. Even if I wanted to describe it, I would not be able to because it is far beyond what my mind, so very limited, can comprehend or imagine.*”

During a retreat that same year, in September 1937, Rozalia rediscovered what a great gift co-participation in Christ’s suffering on the cross was. Accepting the cross of suffering in union with Christ, she desired to learn to love Him even more than any human being had ever loved Him. It was also at that time that Jesus addressed, through her, a call to Poland and all

nations to accept Him as the only Lord and to subject all spheres of life to the requirements posed by His love. In the name of the entire nation, this act was to be performed jointly by spiritual and temporal authorities.

In one of her mystical encounters, Rozalia heard, *"If you want to save the world, you must enthrone the Sacred Heart of Jesus in all countries and nations of the world. This is the only hope. Those countries and nations that do not accept it, and do not submit to the reign of Jesus' sweet love, shall perish forever from the face of the earth and shall never rise again... Remember, my child, make certain that so important a matter is not overlooked and forgotten."*

Rozalia proceeded to pray for this intention and offered up all her toils and sufferings for it. The spiritual director of Father Zygmunt Dobrzycki, the Superior-General of the Paulines, Father Pius Przeidziecki, spoke on several occasions to the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Hlond, about the enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Wanting to ensure that Rozalia was reliable, Cardinal Hlond required Rozalia to undergo a medical examination and submit the results to Church authorities. A neurological exam was conducted by Dr. Horodenski, who found that Rozalia was of sound mind.

Rozalia conveyed Jesus and Mary's call to reformation. Poland's failure to reform, in the late 1930's, was to bring about a terrible war, because its main causes were sins of lasciviousness, killing and hatred. Only by enthroning Christ would Poland and the world be protected against a disastrous war. Rozalia's greatest wish was to see Poland enthrone Christ and for other nations to follow its example.

During World War II (1938-1945), the Polish people experienced arrest, deportation to concentration camps and mass murder and constant threats to life. Rozalia wrote: *"In spite of all this, I am at peace... If we knew how Jesus loves us, we would not let fear or terror anywhere near our souls for a single moment."* Rozalia cared most to save as many people as possible from eternal damnation.

At the beginning of World War II, Rozalia was employed at an outpatient clinic, where German doctors worked. She learned German. She continued to be greatly upset by the fact that despite a raging war, people would not mend their ways and still kept on offending God with grave sins. She often cried over the fate of her nation. Her pure heart and keen powers of observation allowed her to see the immense moral decline of society. In October 1939, she wrote, *"Such degradation and so many sins have never been found in the Polish nation as recently."* In her prayers, Rozalia incessantly pleaded with God for mercy on sinners. In the spirit of expiation for their sins, she accepted all her sufferings and humiliations with love. Jesus, in return, inundated her soul with the indescribable joy of His closeness and love.

In early 1941, Rozalia's health greatly deteriorated, but she did not stop working at the hospital. Until the end, she gave herself entirely to the service of God and her neighbor. She wrote, *"A night duty offers something very important for me... Jesus, the sick and me... This is when Jesus, in a special way, lowers himself to reach my soul."*

Through her work, prayer and suffering, Rozalia did her best to make the day of enthronement arrive as soon as possible, when nations would be given under the reign of Christ the King. She, thereby, fulfilled Jesus' request: *"I wish to rule absolutely in human hearts. Ask for the hastening of my rule in souls through the enthronement."*

Four years before she died, Rozalia wrote to her confessor, *"I am in the evening of life. I like sunsets so much: then my soul submerges in God, the Son of Justice, and I think of the Lord, how I am to love Him and please Him, so that my life will end just like the ending of a day, but what follows (in the next life) is a bright and fair day."*

In early September 1944, at age 43, Rozalia began to feel very weak. A friend, sick with influenza, asked for her help. During that call, Rozalia caught a bad cold and took to bed. Her

health deteriorated day by day. On September 11, 1944, she was taken to the hospital. Never putting aside her Rosary, Rozalia received Holy Communion and the Sacrament of the Sick. Rozalia Celakowna died in her sleep on the night of September 12, 1944.

She was buried at the Rakowice Cemetery in Krakow, Poland. Despite the war, her funeral was attended by many priests, nuns, family members and friends. Soon news spread that through her intercession God had granted people extraordinary graces. (The above are liberal excerpts from the writing of Fr. Mieczystaw Piotrowski, S. Chr.)²

Servant of God, Rozalia Celakowna was declared venerable with the promulgation of the decree of heroic virtue on April 9, 2022, by His Holiness Pope Francis. Vice Postulator is Rev. Pascual Cebollada Silvestre, SJ. Website: www.celakowna.pl.³

“If Poland does not revive spiritually and does not abandon her sins, she will perish. Only a complete spiritual revival and surrender to the reign of My Heart may save not only Poland but also other nations from complete doom.” - Jesus

“Jesus, grant me love, a love that can love you for the entire world, loving You to distraction, in a way that You have never been loved before on this earth. I can say this because You, Jesus, are able to broaden my little heart to infinity. You are almighty, so You will work this miracle.” - Rozalia

References:

- 1) Rhoslyn Thomas. (29 Aug 2014) A history of abortion in Poland. Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. Accessed 21 April 2022. <https://www.spuc.org.uk/Article/382473/A-history-of-abortion-in-Poland-Blog-archive>
- 2) Fr. Mieczystaw Piotrowski S. Chr. (1 Sep 2018). The Servant of God Rozalia Celakowna. Accessed 21 April 2022. <https://www.michaeljournal.org/articles/roman-catholic-church/item/the-servant-of-god-rozalia-celakowna>
- 3) Hagiography Circle. 1944. 22) Rozalia Celek. Accessed 19 April 2022. www.newsaints.faithweb.com/year/1944.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