



Dear Sisters,

Yesterday, the Solemnity of Christ King of the Universe, November 25, 2012, at 12:30 PM in the Divine Master Community of Czestochowa (Poland), the Lord called to eternal life our sister

**SR. M. BEATA HENRYKA MICHALCZYK,
BORN ON OCTOBER 13, 1931 IN WLODZIMIERZ WOLYNSKI (UKRAINE).**

Henryka was born in a country that belonged to Poland from 1919 to 1939, and then passed to Russia at the beginning of the Second World War. This city is also the birthplace of St. Jehoshaphat, bishop and martyr, who is greatly venerated by the Greek-Catholics as their patron. Living her childhood on the border enabled our sister to learn three languages: Polish, Russian and Ukraine.

She came to know our Congregation and, with the fervor of an eighteen-year-old, she entered in Czestochowa on September 8, 1949, confident in our Congregation, which was still in the process of ecclesial approval in Poland. *"Little by little we were recognized, and the first vocations entered; among these was Henryka Michalczyk"*, testified Sr. M. Timotea Bovetti, a pioneer in Poland. Given the various political and ecclesiastical difficulties of erecting a novitiate in Poland, after the equivalent of one year of formation and with the support of Primo Maestro, the dispensation was granted by the Holy See. Henryka, together with three other young women, made her first profession on April 13, 1952, in Czestochowa, and her perpetual vows on April 13, 1957, in the same city.

This sister fostered a longing for holiness while being aware of her own limitations, as she expressed in a letter written after her religious profession: *"I am writing immediately to thank you for the great favor granted to me in being allowed to make the religious profession. I feel that I am unworthy of such a great grace, but I have placed all my trust in Jesus, who can do all things. In spite of so much misery and weakness, I do not become discouraged, and with the grace of God, I hope to become a saint (to M. M. Lucia Ricci, Czestochowa, 5/19/1952).*

Professionally qualified with a diploma in embroidery, artistic decoration, and theater, she was able to put these talents to use in the mission. Her interior life guided her hands in the production, in painting or in the most delicate embroideries, of many faces of the Madonna of Jasna Gora and of other images. She directed the preparation of beautiful presentations and animated them to the joy of all, as some sisters affectionately recall.

She expressed her opinions frankly, but she was also discrete, silent, and sensitive to the sufferings of others. Well-liked, especially by the younger sisters, she was affectionately called *Sr. Beata*.

The apostolic mission of Sr. M. Beata is interwoven with our difficult history in this nation, under a Communist regime that controlled every expression of religious freedom. In the first period she dedicated herself, although secretly, to the embroidery of liturgical vestments. From 1966 to 1967, she was with other sisters at a parish in Warsaw *Falenica*. Here she dedicated herself to the parish secretariat and the responsibility for the mini-community. From 1967 to 1969 she was the local superior and responsible for the laundry of the Dominican Fathers in Lublin; from 1969 to 1973 she was at the Divine Master house in Czestochowa, dedicating herself to gardening; and from 1973 to 1978 she was in the embroidery and sewing room in Piastow, near Warsaw. In 1978 she returned to the Divine Master house in Czestochowa, where she continued with embroidery to the extent her health permitted. Suffering from diabetes, her health progressively declined. This was further complicated by the onset of Alzheimer's and sclerosis. Since her physical condition no longer permitted her to work, she spent many hours before the Blessed Sacrament, simply gazing upon the Sacred Host! From March of 2012, by this time, immobile, Sr. M. Beata was lovingly assisted by the sisters, until the moment of death, which was caused by cardiac insufficiency.

Today she is certainly united with the Pauline Family in Heaven to celebrate Blessed James Alberione, and interceding for our presence in Eastern Europe!

Sr. M. Paolo Mancini
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