



Dear Sisters,

Today, July 4, 2021, in the community of Częstochowa (Poland), at 11:20 AM, Jesus Master definitively called to himself our sister

**SR. M. BERNARDETTA - MONIKA KURASZEWICZ
born on April 24, 1939 in Sachnowicze (Poland).**

Born to a Christian family in the eastern territories of pre-war Poland (now the Diocese of Vilnius – Lithuania), she was brought to the baptismal font on May 3, 1939. She received her First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation in the parish in Lubsko, where her parents settled in 1947. She is the third of five children who were educated by their parents in the Christian faith. The entire family was consecrated to the Heart of Jesus and regularly celebrated the First Friday of the month, a well-known popular devotion. Despite the great distance from the parish church, they usually participated in all the Sunday Masses. The pastor testified that the parents, through their exemplary lifestyle, were true apostles in the parish. In 1956, at seventeen years of age, Monika entered the Congregation in Częstochowa and, at the conclusion of the novitiate, made her religious profession on September 8, 1958 in the community of Częstochowa. On September 8, 1963, she made her perpetual profession in the same location.

Sr. M. Bernardetta fulfilled various ministries in the Congregation: from domestic work or gardening, to making rosaries, as did many sisters at that time. She also assumed roles of responsibility: Local Superior in Grabówka (1969-1972) and Łapy (1983-1986), Novice Mistress (1976-1979) and then Formator for the Postulants (1979-1982), various terms as Regional Councilor (1976-1979 and 1986-1989) and Local Councilor, as well as Regional Secretary (1979-1982).

She was one of the first sisters to leave for Italy (1966-1968) during the difficult years of the Communist regime in Poland. In Rome she received the diploma in Religious Sciences and willingly made herself available for various apostolic services, including the souvenir shops in the Vatican at Saint Peter's Basilica. This sister always manifested the desire to contribute generously through her work. Unfortunately, during her last stay

in Italy, 2007 - 2008, she began showing the first signs of memory loss, which progressed to the point of making it necessary for her to return to her homeland.

Thanks to her catechetical preparation, Sr. M. Bernardetta was a catechist at Łapy and Częstochowa for many years. But she is remembered especially for her great zeal for vocations: gifted with a special vocational sensitivity, a spirit of dedication to the Congregation, diligence, a sense of humor and eloquence, she attracted many young women.

For a long period she was responsible for the pastoral work for vocations and organized spiritual retreats for young women in our DM community in Częstochowa. She often participated in the vocational Sundays organized by the dioceses, but she was especially an untiring and creative vocational animator. She often travelled by train and adopted a strategy for approaching young people that was simple; she sought out empty seats among the young women and sat there. Weaving the rosary beads, during the trip she would also engage in conversation with those seated near her, arousing in them the interest and the desire to meet again. Then they exchanged addresses and began a friendship that she carefully cultivated until she led the young women to Jesus, to a direct encounter with him in the experience of the vocational spiritual exercises. Many of our sisters owe to her the discovery of the call of Jesus Master to follow him in the Congregation!

The collaboration of Sr. M. Bernardetta was also decisive in the process of restarting the presence of the Society of Saint Paul in Poland in 1977, with the arrival of Father Innocenzo Dante from Italy. In the Pauline seminary, she was the one who cared for the boys in vocational discernment: a maternal presence for these young men who were discovering the way to a vocation to the priesthood and religious life, also Pauline, unknown in Poland at that time.

In 2008, upon her return from service in the Vatican, Sr. M. Bernardetta was transferred to the Divine Master community in Varsavia. Here she was usually busy weaving rosary beads or the threads for gigliuccio, non stop, even in her free time.

Despite her continual physical activity, the symptoms involving the memory became more evident. Diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, in 2011 Sr. M. Bernardetta was transferred to the DM community in Częstochowa where, accompanied by the care and tenderness of the sisters, the complex clinical picture gradually became more critical. This Sunday morning, accompanied by the prayer of the community, she expired, consumed like a candle.

We entrust to our sister the journey of our communities in Poland, the initiatives for the vocations which, especially during the summer, are promoted everywhere. And we ask her intercession that a profound vocational awareness may be revived in everyone.

Sr. M. Michaela Haneth'