

Blessed Alexandrina Maria da Costa

born 3 March 1904, Balasar, Portugal
died 13 October 1955, Balasar, Portugal

On the eve of Easter, fourteen-year-old Alexandrina was at home with her sister and an apprentice. They were sewing together in an upstairs room when three men entered the house intent on rape. Alexandrina escaped through a window and fell thirteen feet to the ground. She grabbed a wooden board and staggered back into the house to defend the other girls. The startled men ran off, leaving them unharmed. Unfortunately, Alexandrina had injured her spine in the fall and began to have trouble walking. By nineteen she was completely paralyzed and remained bedridden until her death. Alexandrina came to understand that suffering was her vocation, that she had been called to be a victim soul. As a living witness to Christ's Passion, she would contribute to the redemption of humanity by enduring her suffering and offering it to God.

In 1931 Alexandrina experienced a vision in which Jesus ordered her to "*Love, suffer and make reparation.*" Beginning in October 1938, for three hours every Friday, Alexandrina relived the Stations of the Cross with the accompaniment of excruciating pain. Word spread, drawing the reverent, the curious, and skeptical clergy; while Alexandrina remained serene. Her reenactments ceased in March 1942, and for the last thirteen years of her life she consumed no food but the Eucharist. She baffled the medical experts who conducted many painful and humiliating tests on her. Honouring Jesus' instruction "*I want that while your heart is filled with suffering, on your lips there is a smile,*" Alexandrina obediently smiled at thousands of pilgrims who sought her prayers and intercession. Today she is considered one of the most important mystics of the twentieth century. Alexandrina is commemorated by the Salesian Order on 13 October.

The Genius of Alexandrina:

By accepting her call to become a victim soul, Alexandrina transcended her own suffering and became a witness to Christ's love. She died in peace saying, "*I am happy, because I am going to Heaven.*"

Reflection:

"Keep yourselves in the love of God and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life."

Jude 21