

Blessed Alice Kotowska
(Maria Jadwiga)

born 20 November 1899, Warsaw, Poland
died 11 November 1939, Pomorskie, Poland

At the age of seventeen, Maria left medical school to join the Polish army and spent a year attending wounded soldiers. She was later recognized for her heroism with Poland's highest honour, the Polonia Restituta Service Cross.

Joining the Sister of the Resurrection, Maria took the religious name Alice. In 1934 Alice and six Sisters travelled to northern Poland to establish a mission in Wejherowo. Alice had become superior of their convent and director of an education program when the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939. As a nun, a war hero, and a member of the intelligentsia, Alice was marked for death, but she refused to abandon the convent. On 24 October 1939, she was arrested by the Gestapo, then held in prison until 11 November, when she was taken with a group to the forest in Pańnica, shot to death, and tossed with the others into a mass grave. Alice's remaining Sisters were transported to a Nazi work camp in Bojanowo where more than four hundred nuns were already assigned to manual labour and denied the sacraments.

In 1991 when a Canonical Process of Beatification for Polish martyrs of World War II was begun, eighty-six-year-old Maria Adela Mankiewicz, one of the last remaining witnesses to Alice's life, personally travelled to Włocławek to present her cause. Alice Kotowska was beatified in 1999 with the 108 Martyrs of Poland.

Alice is considered a patron of families. Sister Teresa Matea Florczak, her official biographer writes, "It seems that her specialty is interceding for graces for spiritual benefits, particularly those in which she herself excelled: recollection, silence, humility, self-control or a cheery disposition."

The Genius of Alice Kotowska:

Alice considered only one thing truly important. She told her Sisters: "*What matters is to be united with God, to be immersed like a drop of water in the Ocean of His Majesty.*"

Meditation:

"Put on the armour of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood, but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens."

Ephesians 6.11-12

Gallick, Sarah The Big Book of Woman Saints p. 341