

**Saint Mariana of Omura**  
born circa 1609, Japan  
died 11 November, 1634, Nagasaki, Japan

When the Japanese government resumed persecuting Christians, Marina and her father turned their home into a refuge for the missionaries. She became a Dominican tertiary, consecrating herself to Christ.

When Marina was arrested, her jailers did not understand how such a beautiful young girl could have made a vow of chastity. They shaved Marina's head and marched her barefoot through the province as if she were a whore or adulteress. This humiliation and loss of face could not break her. Marina's courage strengthened her companions and impressed even those who despised Christianity. Her walk of shame was marked by at least one miracle. According to the Dominican historian Mary Jean Dorcy, Marina was very thirsty and asked one of her guards to look for a stream nearby. He refused because it was obvious that there was no water for miles. Marina insisted that he should look, and he found a stream, exactly where she told him. Christians believed that the stream had been placed there to comfort her. By the time Marina completed her procession, she had become a local heroine. Anxious to get rid of her, the magistrate ordered her execution. Marina and two priests were tied to stakes and surrounded with wood that slowly burned them to death. Debris from the fire filled the air of Nagasaki, and many of her admirers captured bits of ash to treasure as relics. To prevent this sort of thing, the government had the rest of Marina's ashes thrown into the sea.

Marina is commemorated on 28 September with the sixteen other martyrs of Nagasaki.

**The Genius of Marina of Omura:**

When missionaries were allowed to return to Japan in 1858, they were surprised to find twenty thousand Christians who had been practicing their faith in secret for more than two hundred years. These "secret Christians" had been strengthened by the example of Marina and her companions. She is still venerated by Christian women of Japan as an example of spiritual courage.

**Reflection:**

*"These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

Revelation 7.14

Gallick, Sarah, The Big Book of Women Saints, p. 293