



BLESSED ALEXANDRINA DA COSTA

The White Rose of Jesus

Blessed Alexandrina Maria da Costa was born in Balasar, Portugal on March 30, 1904. When only 14, on Holy Saturday, 1918 she and her sister Deolinda and a young apprentice girl were at work sewing. Three men tried to enter the room. The doors were locked but the three men forced them open. Alexandrina, to preserve her purity and virginity, threw herself out of the window, dropping 13 feet to the ground. The damage was irreversible and led to her becoming a paraplegic.

Until she was 19, she would drag herself to church with a numb body. She would remain there before the Most Blessed Sacrament to the amazement of all. As the paralysis worsened and the pain became unbearable, she lost all sense of movement, becoming completely paralysed. Alexandrina was confined to bed permanently from April 14, 1925 for the remaining 30 years of her life.

During the first years, she prayed for recovery, but finally embraced this life and would say, "Our Lady has given me a greater grace: first, acceptance, then complete conformity to God's will, and finally a desire to suffer."

With this greater union with Jesus in the Tabernacle, through the intercession of Mary, her first mystical phenomenon began. One day, while alone, she thought, "Jesus, you are a prisoner in the Tabernacle as I am in my bed through your will. Let's keep company with each other."

Her primary mission from then on was to be like a Tabernacle lamp. She considered herself a pilgrim from one Tabernacle to another during the long painful nights. Each time she was able to be taken to Mass she offered herself to the Eternal Father as a victim for sinners, together with Jesus. More and more she sensed her mission to be a victim soul for the conversion of sinners. She made a vow to act more perfectly always.

In 1936, Jesus told her to ask the Holy Father for the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart. She did this through her spiritual director, Fr. Pinho, S.J., repeating the request until 1941. The Holy See questioned the Archbishop of Braga about Alexandrina on three occasions.

Acted Out the Passion Though Paralyzed.

Jesus asked her if she would be willing to suffer to bring about this consecration. She agreed. Then began the passion. From Friday, October 3, 1938 until March 24, 1942, on every Friday she went through the sufferings of Jesus' Passion – 182 times in all.

Although completely paralysed, she would get out of bed and with bodily movements and gestures, accompanied by agonizing pain, go through the various movements of Jesus on the Way of the Cross for three and a half hours each time.

She experienced the pain and acted out Jesus being scourged, receiving on herself the quivering blows against the Lord from the whips of the soldiers. Anguished groans escaped her lips. She witnessed and experienced a second group of soldiers relieve the first, who got tired of hurling blows on Jesus. The whips that hit Jesus struck this poor martyr as well. Alexandrina, impersonating the Saviour Jesus, would raise her eyes to heaven and say, "For love of you, O Father, I want and embrace your cross." Those who witnessed these ecstasies would hear her groan and say, "Father, this is for you, and to give you souls."

"Love, suffer, make reparation." Such was the mission given her by Jesus. From 1934 until 1941, at the invitation of the Jesuit priest, Mariano Pinho, S.J., Alexandrina wrote down the words, which Jesus spoke to her.

Pius XII Consecrates the World.

Sr. Lucia of Fatima had already made such requests of the Holy Father for the consecration. Finally, on October 31, 1942, Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in a radio communication in Portuguese to Fatima. He renewed the act in Rome in St Peter's basilica on December 8 that year. Having succeeded in obtaining God's will in this, her suffering of the Passion each Friday ceased.

The Eucharist, Her Only Nourishment.

Beginning on March 27, 1942 and from then on, Alexandrina stopped eating. She lived henceforth only on the Holy Eucharist. Much talk spread about her perpetual absolute fast so the Archbishop of Braga, in whose province she lived, ordered a scientific investigation.

In 1943 for 40 days and 40 nights good doctors at the Foco del Duro Hospital near Oporto, supervised her absolute fast and anuria, a condition causing the absence of urine. Doctors discovered that the Holy Communion host remained intact inside her stomach for about 24 hours, or until she received a new host of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Thus, her very body became a perpetual Tabernacle.

Sr. Lucia was well aware of Alexandrina. Sr. Lucia's mission was to get the Pope and the world's bishops to consecrate the World, and Russia in particular, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1944 Alexandrina's spiritual director, Fr. Umberto Pasquale S.D.B., who was a good friend of Sr. Lucia, asked Alexandrina to continue to dictate her diary as he became aware of the spiritual heights she had attained. She did this until her death.

Prophesied Present "Crisis" for the Church.

Blessed Alexandrina evangelized from her bedside. She promoted Triduum. 40-

hour devotions, Lenten fasts, etc. in the parish. In her final years, as she became known, many sought her out. She was given the charismatic gift of prophecy. She predicted as difficult time coming for the Church. She often lamented the future travails of the Mystical Body of Christ. While praying for the Church, she saw it was in danger of a “great crisis” and threatened by a “wild beast” (devil).

Alexandrina heard Our Lord say, “Tell my ministers to be vigilant, for the devil is preparing a massive assault on the Church. But pray and trust. Victory will be mine.”

In 1950, Alexandrina realized it was the 25th anniversary of her paralysis. On January 7, 1955, she announced that this would be the year of her death. On October 12, she asked for the anointing of the sick. On October 13, the anniversary of the final apparition and miracle of Fatima, Alexandrina announced, “I am happy because I am going to heaven.” At 7.30pm that evening, she breathed her last breath.

The Reason for Alexandrina’s Beatification.

Cardinal Jose Saraiva-Martins, a native Portuguese and prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, spoke of the significance of Alexandrina being raised to the altars of the Church. “Because a saint does not belong to this or that country, but rather to the Church of Christ.”

As the world comes to know Blessed Alexandrina, she will be a powerful witness for reverence toward Jesus Christ, our Lord, in the Holy Eucharist, a model for purity, a model of love for Christ Crucified and His Passion.

Cardinal Saraiva-Martins said:

“Alexandrina was a Eucharistic Weapon who lived for a long time without eating food, her only nourishment being the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist is the centre and the heart of the Church. The Eucharist makes the Church. Without it, the Church does not exist, as the Pope said [*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*].

The Life of Alexandrina is a call to a profound Eucharistic life united to Christ Jesus. “To live with this reality in the life of each one of us and of the Church, this is the example that Alexandrina shows us.”

(With thanks to Immaculate Heart Messenger Jan-Mar 2005)