

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

Events – May 1941

Monday May 5, 1941



Bosnia and Herzegovina: Banja Luka

Bishop Platon Jovanovic (dragged from his sickbed by the Ustashi, tortured and **murdered**, body thrown into the Vrbanja River)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banja_Luka#World_War_II

<http://orthochristian.com/114594.html>

Tuesday May 6, 1941



Croatia: Veljun

Approximately 600 Orthodox Serbs were captured by the Ustashi from the surrounding area, locked in a police station and tortured

Archpriest Branko Dobrosavljevic (father of Nebojsa Dobrosavljevic, captured, despite threats refused to perform a funeral service for his son while he was still alive)

Nebojsa Dobrosavljevic (son of Archpriest Branko Dobrosavljevic, medical student, captured on [May 6, 1941](#), severely tortured)

Fr Dimitrije Skorupan (captured)

<http://orthochristian.com/114594.html>

Wednesday May 7, 1941



Croatia: Kestenovac, near Hrvatski Blagaj

Archpriest Branko Dobrosavljevic (father of Nebojsa Dobrosavljevic, captured on [May 6, 1941](#), despite threats refused to perform a funeral service for his son while he was still alive;

UPDATE: killed)

Nebojsa Dobrosavljevic (son of Archpriest Branko Dobrosavljevic, medical student, captured on [May 6, 1941](#), severely tortured; **UPDATE: killed)**

Fr Dimitrije Skorupan (captured on [May 6, 1941](#); **UPDATE: killed)**

Croatia: Zagreb

Metropolitan Dositej Vasic (aged 62, arrested by the Ustashi government, tortured, later released and sent to a monastery in Belgrade)

https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-el/Доситеј_Васић - with translation

<http://orthochristian.com/114594.html>



Poland - now Ukraine: Lviv

Fr Antoni Guzik SDB (aged 49, arrested on [April 24, 1940](#) for 'anti-Soviet agitation'; **UPDATE: sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment in a labor camp, sent to Starobelsk POW Camp in Ukraine)**

<https://biographies.library.nd.edu/catalog/biography-0891>

Thursday May 8, 1941



Poland: Auschwitz Concentration Camp

Fr Jan Eugeniusz Wilkowska OFM Conv (aged 26, arrested on [February 17, 1941](#) in [Niepokalanow monastery, Teresin](#) by the Gestapo; transferred from [Piwiak Prison in Warsaw](#) to Auschwitz on [April 4, 1941](#); **UPDATE: died)**

Fr Konrad Saweda (administered last rites to Fr Jan Eugeniusz Wilkowska)

<http://missionimmaculata.com/index.php/mi-saints/blessed-martyrs-of-niepokalanow>



Austria: Hartheim euthanasia center, Alkhoven, Eferding

Fr Gottfried Neunhauserer OSB (aged 59, **gassed**)

http://www.microsofttranslator.com/bv.aspx?ref=SERP&br=ro&mkt=en-US&dl=en&lp=DE_EN&a=http%3a%2f%2fwww.salzburg.com%2fwiki%2findex.php%2fGottfried_Neunh%25C3%25A4userer

Friday May 9, 1941



Austria: Mauthausen concentration camp

Fr Jozef Cebula OMI (aged 39, Polish citizen, arrested on [April 2, 1941](#); **UPDATE**: **shot dead** after telling a guard "It is not you who are in charge. God will judge you")

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%B3zef_Cebula

Monday May 12, 1941



Kazakhstan

Catherine Galler (aged 65, widow, arrested in [Kiev, Ukraine](#) on [July 29, 1935](#) for donating money to persecuted Christians and keeping religious literature in her home; sentenced to 3 years' internal exile on [May 14, 1936](#); sentence extended another 3 years on [May 11, 1938](#) for 'anti-Soviet agitation'; **UPDATE**: released)

<https://biographies.library.nd.edu/catalog/biography-0288>



Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo

Metropolitan Petar (arrested, later **died** in Jasenovac concentration camp)

Croatia: Glina

Fr Bogdan Opacic (locked inside his church with 160-317 others by Ustase soldiers, killed when the church was set afire, 100 more were killed the next day at Prekopi)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glina_massacres
<http://orthochristian.com/114594.html>

Wednesday May 14, 1941



Croatia: Zagreb

Archbishop Aloysius Viktor Stepinac (aged 43, sent a letter to Ustase leader Ante Pavelic protesting the massacre at Glina, received no reply)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glina_massacres



Czech Republic

Fr Vaclav Celestin Sulc OH (aged 49, arrested by the Gestapo, sent to Pankrac prison)

<http://www.ustrcr.cz/cs/vaclav-celestin-sulc> - with translation



United States – Indiana: Indianapolis

Minnie Vautrin (aged 54, missionary, college vice president, as of December 13, 1937 [the beginning of the Rape of Nanking] had continued preparations to house female refugees at Ginling College in Nanjing, China, would over the following months protect 10,000 women from rape; slapped by a Japanese soldier on December 17, 1937 when he could not gain access to a locked dormitory, forced to stand at the campus front gate while the Japanese were deciding to take several male employees to be shot, convinced the Japanese to release the employees, the soldiers left after another group of soldiers abducted 12 women from another campus gate; threatened by a Japanese soldier with a pistol on December 18, 1937 when she confronted him to make him leave the campus; threatened by a Japanese soldier with a knife on February 8, 1938 after she rescued a woman from rape; announced to fellow staff on May 2, 1940 that she could no longer

continue her work, two weeks later began her trip to the U.S.; **UPDATE: ended her life by flooding a kitchen with gas from the oven, left a note stating she was a failure and did not want to burden others if she went insane**, eulogized by her missionary society as a victim of war, had written to a friend weeks earlier "Had I ten perfect lives, I would give them all to China")

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minnie_Vautrin

https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7976980M/American_Goddess_at_the_Rape_of_Nanking

Saturday May 17, 1941



Ukraine

Fr Ignacy Drozdowicz (aged 38, arrested in [Shchitniki, Poland](#) in [September 1939](#), sent to Starobelsk POW Camp in Ukraine; **UPDATE: sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in a labor camp, possibly sent to Sibltag labor camp in Russia**)

<https://biographies.library.nd.edu/catalog/biography-0932>



Poland - now Ukraine: Kolomyia

Fr Kazimierz Kozlowski SJ (aged 39, arrested in [1940](#) by the Soviets; **UPDATE: sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment in a labor camp, sent to Sevvostoklag in Magadan oblast, Russia**)

<https://biographies.library.nd.edu/catalog/biography-0899>

Friday May 23, 1941



Poland: Krakow

Fr Jozef Kowalski (aged 30, arrested by the Gestapo and tortured)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%B3zef_Kowalski_\(priest\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%B3zef_Kowalski_(priest))



Austria: Hartheim euthanasia center, Alkoven, Eferding

Fr Franz Steurer (aged 34, **gassed**)

http://newsaints.faithweb.com/new_martyrs/Austria.htm

Sunday May 25, 1941



Poland - now Lithuania: Vilnius

Fr Kazimierz Kucharski SJ (aged 46, arrested, transferred to Butyrka Prison in Moscow)

<https://biographies.library.nd.edu/catalog/biography-1130>

Wednesday May 28, 1941



Poland

Fr Maximilian Maria Kolbe OFM Conv aka Raymund Kolbe (aged 47, arrested with four others by the Gestapo on **February 17, 1941** in **Niepokalanow monastery, Teresin**; **UPDATE:** transferred to Auschwitz)

Poland: Dzialdowo concentration camp

Bishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski (aged 83, beaten when he refused to profane Christian symbols, **died**)

Poland - now Ukraine: Lviv

Fr Wiktor Cebrowski (arrested by the Soviets on **September 28, 1940**; **UPDATE:** sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment in a labor camp, sent to Starobelsk)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoni_Julian_Nowowiejski

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maximilian_Kolbe

<https://biographies.library.nd.edu/catalog/biography-1502>



Germany: Dachau concentration camp

Fr Lacina Jaroslav CCOP (aged 51, Czech national, **killed**)

http://newsaints.faithweb.com/new_martyrs/Czech1.htm

May 1941, date unknown



Ethiopia: Addis Ababa

Hermann Bahlburg (aged 49, missionary, German citizen, protected and sheltered 200 Ethiopians at his mission during the Yekatit 12 Massacre of **February 19, 1937**; **UPDATE**: interned by British occupational forces, would not be released until 1948)

Hinrich Rathje (missionary, German citizen, same account)

https://openlibrary.org/books/OL26952921M/The_Addis_Ababa_Massacre - pg 478

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Bahlburg - with translation



Poland: Belostok Prison

Fr Ryszard Grabski OFM Cap (aged 31, captured by German border guards while illegally crossing from Soviet held territory in **1940**, handed over to Soviet border guards;

UPDATE: sent to Kotlas, Arkhangelsk oblast, Russia)

<https://biographies.library.nd.edu/catalog/biography-0315>