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Sister Leonella's STORY

MARTYR

Sister Leonella Sgorbati

Pray for us

Sister Leonella Sgorbati, an Italian Consolata Missionary working in Somalia, had no illusions about the danger of her work. **"I know there is a bullet with my name on it.** I don't know when it will arrive, but as long as it does not arrive, I will stay [in Somalia]," she said in a 2006 television interview.

Six months later, Sr Leonella's prediction came true. On 17 September 2006, Sr Leonella was leaving the Consolata nursing school (that she helped found) within the children's hospital in Mogadishu; when gunmen shot her several times. After she was shot, as she was bleeding to death, **Sr Leonella extended love to her killers, "I forgive, I forgive, I forgive,"** she said, according to sisters who were with her when she died.

Sr Leonella spent more than half of her life in Africa, first arriving there in the 1970s and serving as superior general of the Consolata Missionary Sisters in Kenya from 1993 to 1999.

It is thought that extremists in Somalia may have been worried about Sr Leonella's success with the nursing school and worried she would try to convert the students to

Christianity. Somalia is a majority-Muslim country.

Pope Benedict praised Sr Leonella at one of his general audiences, "Some are asked to give the supreme testimony of blood, just as ... Sr. Leonella Sgorbati, who fell victim to violence. This sister, who for many years served the poor and the children in Somalia, died pronouncing the word 'forgive'. This is the most authentic Christian testimony, a peaceful sign of contradiction which shows the victory of love over hatred and evil."

The process investigating the sanctity of Sr Leonella was launched in 2012 and in 2018, **Sr Leonella was beatified making her Blessed Leonella Sgorbati.**

MAKE A DONATION

- in honour of Sister Leonella Sgorbati to help Religious sisters working in Latin America. Your offering will purchase transport for pastoral care and help poor congregations to survive and continue their mission.