

Blessed Laura Vicuna

Memorial

22 January

Profile

Daughter of Jose Domingo Vicuna and Mercedes Pino. Her father was a soldier, and Laura was born 3 months after the outbreak of civil war in Chile. With her husband in arms, and herself and her infant in peril, Laura's mother moved across the Andes to raise the girl in Las Lajas, Argentina. Laura's father was killed soon after, and to survive, Mercedes became the mistress and common-law wife of a man named Manuel Mora.

Mora paid for Laura to attend a boarding school run by the Salesian Sisters, where the girl was extremely happy and helpful. Made her First Communion on 2 June 1901, a decisive moment in her life. "Oh my God, I want to love you and serve you all my life," she wrote in her notebook. "I give you my soul, my heart, my whole self." She tried then, at age ten, to join the Salesians, but her bishop recommended she wait.

Home for Christmas holidays, Laura had to fend off the repeated amorous advances of Mora, finally being forced to flee the house to avoid him. She prayed to be spared the life her mother was leading, offered her own life if they could escape from it, and asked her confessor again for permission to join the Salesians. Because he knew of that no matter how convenient it was, Laura had a true call to the religious life, he permitted it. She joined the *Sodality of the Children of Mary* on 8 December 1901.

In late 1903, Laura became severely ill, and returned to her mother. On 14 January 1904, in a drunken rage, Mora began ordering the mother and daughter around. Laura tried to run from the house, but Mora caught her and beat her unconscious. Though she recovered consciousness, Laura never recovered her health, dying eight days later from a combination the disease and abuse. When she learned of her daughter's offer to die for Mercedes, the mother left Mora and returned to the Church.

Born

5 April 1891 in at Santiago, Chile

Died

22 January 1904 at Las Lajas, Argentina

Beatified

1988 by Pope John Paul II

Canonized

pending

Patronage

- ◆ abuse victims
- ◆ Argentina
- ◆ incest victims
- ◆ loss of parents

