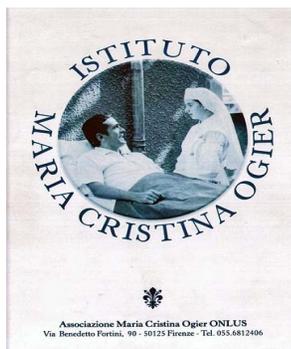


Maria received Holy Communion every day. Each night after the family Rosary, her mother would find her on her knees. To a suggestion that she go to bed, Maria once replied, "I Must still pray for the whole world, for the missions, for Don Setti, for the sick..."

She had a great love of Our Lady and was attracted to St. Francis of Assisi. After reading his life she applied to and was admitted into the Franciscan Third Order. Still dreaming of a medical career, Maria enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine at the University and attended several lectures, but she was becoming unusually tired and weak, absent-minded and inattentive. The tumor in her brain remained the same size, and her leg still dragged, but another difficulty was added when it became necessary for Maria to support her right hand with her left. One day after attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion, as was her custom, Maria suffered a bulbar paralysis, which ended her life.

During her 19 years Maria had wanted to establish houses for the sick, where there would be better living conditions and which would be maintained by personnel who had good attitudes towards the sick. After her death, a foundation was established by those who were inspired by her ideals. The nursing homes she envisioned were established, as well as a day hospital and the means to refuel the boat, the *Maria Cristina*. In her memory a home for young girls was founded, as well as homes for pregnant women who suffered from serious economic and social difficulties. In 1986 the Center was visited by Pope John Paul II, who spoke with Dr. Olgier about his saintly daughter.



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**Heavenly Help for Those Who Suffer  
from**

**Brain Tumors**

**Seek the intercession of  
Servant of God Maria Cristina Olgier**



**(1955 — 1974)**

**Servant of God**  
**Maria Cristina Ogier**  
**(1955-1974)**

Maria Ogier was especially devoted to the well-being of others, especially the missions, the unborn and the sick. What this young girl of only 19 years started as an act of charity is still continuing today by those who admired her ideals and the sufferings which she offered up for the welfare of the Church.

She was born in Florence, Italy, the only child of Dr. Henry Ogier, and obstetrician and gynecologist, and Gina Matteoni, both devout Catholics. Maria was a healthy child until the age of four, when she contracted an illness, common to children. But unlike the others, she did not recover completely. Eventually she began to drag her right foot, which resulted in numerous examinations. The diagnosis was a devastating one: a tumor on the brain. Because of her tender years it was thought best not to operate, since her survival was uncertain. Instead, she was prepared for her First Holy Communion, which she received on April 30, 1961.

Four months later, accompanied by her spiritual director, Don Setti, and her parents, Maria went to Lourdes for the first time. She was taken in a wheelchair and frequently drank the miraculous water. Later, on several occasions she was privileged to visit Padre Pio.

Maria was well for a time, but at the age of seven she once again began to limp slightly. Still, she never underwent the delicate operation that might have cured the condition. When asked how she felt, she replied: "There are many people suffering more than I am, and they are poor and I am short of nothing." When her mother noticed that she did not pray for herself, she asked Maria if she wanted to pray to the Madonna for a cure. Maria replied, "No, Mamma, I pray for the salvation of the world."

She attended school when she was able, and at the age of 13 she helped organize prayer groups at two churches. Under the direction of her spiritual advisor, she advanced quickly in virtue and in the desire to practice charity. At the age of 14 or 15, she joined Don Setti's group, which visited hospitals, prisons and the House of Hope for needy families. The visits to the hospitals inspired Maria in the choice of her life's work. She decided to become a doctor so she could help the sick.

Although this dream was never realized, Maria was to accomplish much in this field, and in an extraordinary manner. A doctor-priest of the Capuchin Order was visiting Florence for a refresher course in obstetrics under the direction of her father, Dr. Olgier. The priest was explaining the difficulty in the mission field of the Amazon in getting patients to the missionaries' hospital. The sick and wounded were transported several miles by canoes, but many of the sick died on the way. He announced, "What is needed is a boat with all the facilities for casualties and first aid."

Maria's charity was immediately aroused. It was said that she never saw a person in need whom she did not help by her charity. This was a new field of endeavor, and she immediately began to write letters to everyone she knew – to various religious organizations, to newspapers, churches, businesses and schools. Her persistence was rewarded. Even though suffering frequent headaches and difficulty in walking, she had plans for the boat drawn up, and in time the costs were met. Then, with the help of her father and his friends, the boat was fitted with all the latest testing equipment and medical supplies. On the day it was given to the Capuchin Order, a picture was taken of the family in front of the boat, which was named the *Maria Cristina* in her honor. It continues to sail the Amazon River to the present time. The building and outfitting of this boat proves that it is truly amazing what one person can do, even though suffering from a malignant condition.