



The Right Thing To Do *A Salute to Christian Rescuers*

Most people know right from wrong. When doing the right thing puts us and our family in mortal danger, which will we choose?

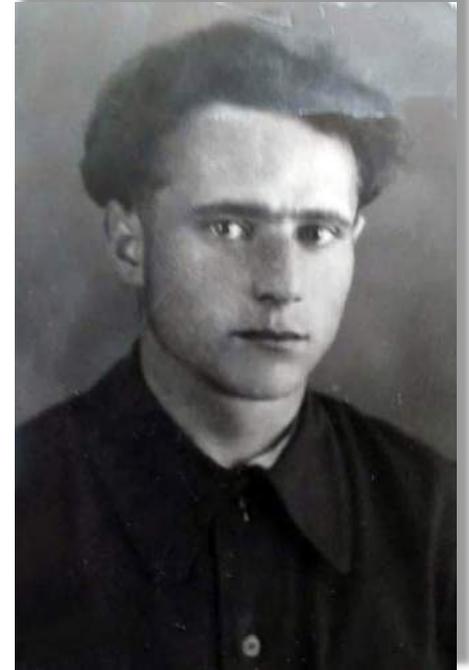
During the Holocaust it was a crime punishable by death to help a Jewish man, woman, or child. Even giving them a crust of bread could mean a death sentence. Still, hundreds of Christians and others risked their lives and the lives of their families, to save people. Yes, there were some who did it for the money, and some who betrayed the people they were hiding when the money ran out. But the majority of rescuers, from diplomats to farmers, from teenagers to clergy, saved hundreds of thousands of innocent lives, simply because, as many have told me, **"It was the right thing to do."**

Survivor Grigoriy Zalmanovich Kagan writes: *"When I was just ten years old, I was imprisoned in the Rogachev ghetto. On that horrendous day, March 20, 1942, my mother, father, brothers, sisters, and grandmother (Father's mother) were shot and killed; I managed, with G-d's help, to run away.*



Ravine in Rogachev where Grigoriy's family was killed.

During the Holocaust, until June 26, 1944 (the day which brought me freedom), I was protected by three Christian women: Yefrosinia Samuilovna Zavadskaya, Yadviga Viktorovna Schigelskaya, and Yekaterina Ivanovna Kuleshevskaya. All of their names are inscribed on the Wall of Memory [at Yad Vashem] in Jerusalem. Their medals were inscribed: "He who saves one life saves the entire world!" I was present at all the award ceremonies as a person who was saved.



Grigoriy Zalmanovich after the War

G-d helped me run and walk safely along the horrifying roads of war. On the day of the mass killing I reached the village of Klyuchi, 12 kilometers from where the massacre of the Jews occurred. Yefrosinia Samuilovna hid me for 21 hours, and the following morning she poured milk into a decanter, walked me through the local vegetable gardens and told me, "Go, my boy. Change your last name. Maybe G-d will save you." And I walked away. On that day, she was visited by police who were looking for me. Had I not left, I could have been shot and killed along with Yefrosinia and her children.

From March 26 to August 5, 1942, I lived with Yadviga Viktorovna in the village of Senazhatki, in the Gomel Region. She was suspected of hiding me, so I had to move to the village of Zelenaya Sloboda, in the Zhlobin District. I lived there with Yekaterina Ivanovna until November 26, 1943. On that day, Yekaterina Ivanovna died.

I ended up in the Krasnoberezhsky Children's Donor Concentration Camp in the village of Krasniy Bereg. 5000 children perished in this camp. Using a method developed by Hitler's thug, Dr. Mengele, children's blood was drained from their bodies and collected to treat wounded Wehrmacht soldiers. Children were suspended in the air, and a cut was made in their heels until all the blood drained. Then the corpses were burned or taken out to be buried. Soon it would be my turn. According to estimates, there were eleven such camps in Belarus."

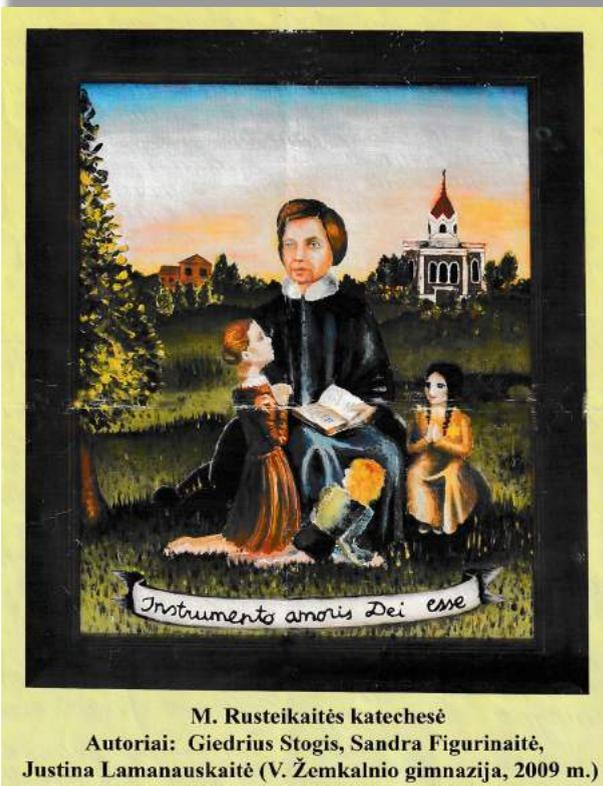
In 2012, Father Patrick Desbois, a French Roman Catholic priest, author of *In Broad Daylight: The Secret Procedures behind the Holocaust by Bullets*, and the groundbreaking book, *Holocaust by Bullets*, helped Grigoriy connect with The Survivor Mitzvah Project, and we began supporting him with lifesaving aid.

Grigoriy wrote, *"In 2012 I received a delegation of French or English visitors. My meeting with them lasted for four hours. In France these people told the priest (who is also a writer) about me. And he, dear Zane, told you about me. You wrote to me later and described everything you knew about me from what you were told by the priest. I am so happy and thankful to G-d for your help to me. I am also thankful because this is the second time in my life [after the war years] that I have met people like you and your colleagues – those who devote their lives to searching the world for people like me, and offering support. **My beloved, my dears, you are doing enormous and very difficult work – so important for these people. May the Almighty protect you, your family, and your friends who "fight" for us on the same field with you.**"*

Survivor Shulamit Lev writes, "I was one month old when we were locked in the ghetto in Siauliai, Lithuania. No matter how much Mother and Grandmother tried to protect me, I got sick. Mother kept looking for an opportunity for us to escape. Every morning she was sent to forced labor. It was very difficult work, and everyone was starving. Once outside the ghetto, Mother would slip away, remove the six-pointed star from her clothing, and if stopped by police, she would tell them she was a seamstress. She was actually looking for someone who could help us, which she eventually did find.

In autumn 1943, in the wake of a 'Kinderaktion' [the mass murder of ghetto children], two-year-old Shulamit was given a sleeping pill. Her mother, Polya, tied the sleeping child to her body, put on an oversized coat and shawl and left the ghetto with a column of workers as they filed out. Their rescuers, Antanas and Lione Margaritis and Marija Rusteikaite waited for them with a wagon placed at a pre-arranged location.

The convent where we were hidden was later destroyed and is now located in Panevezys, where numerous documents and medals of recognition awarded to Marija Rusteikaite by Yad Vashem, are displayed. I was invited to the convent several years ago by Marija's nephew, and was given a warm welcome. Everyone there knew the history of my family and the two other families saved by Marija. There was a painting on the wall of a woman, a teenage girl, a small boy with a book at the woman's feet, and a younger girl with black braids, her hands folded as if she was a Catholic in prayer. BUT, on the left side of her chest there was a six-pointed star, a 'Magen David'.



I was told that this girl was me, painted by Sister Lenora, who was responsible for education at the school. She had collected a large archive of materials about Marija Rusteikaite and teaches her students about how Marija saved us.

I must tell you that my mother, grandmother and I experienced many grievous events, but at the same time, my fate has led me to become acquainted with many good people. Behind every one of us who survived, is an entire life filled with bitterness from the loss of family and friends. **Only a tiny remnant of our people managed to survive – thanks to those who extended a helping hand while risking their own lives.**

It is impossible to overestimate your organization's work. You are doing truly great work! You are well-known in many countries and also in small, remote places. I can only imagine how many stories you have already recorded. I can imagine the sunshine you and your team leave in the places you visit. It is not only the material assistance, but the uniting of all of our hearts.

I bless fate for giving me the opportunity to meet all of you, even if it's just with pen and paper. From the bottom of my heart I express my gratitude, admiration and love to you, your colleagues and all those participating in The Survivor Mitzvah Project."

There are thousands of stories of brave rescuers during the Holocaust, many of them Christian. May their lives be honored and remembered. May their compassionate deeds serve as a meaningful touchstone to the goodness inherent in all of us, and as reminders to always do the right thing. – Zane Buzby

Donate online at survivormitzvah.org or send a check to:

**The Survivor Mitzvah Project
2658 Griffith Park Blvd., Ste. #299
Los Angeles, CA 90039**

**The Survivor Mitzvah Project is a 501c3 non-profit public charity.
100% of your donation goes directly into the hands of a Holocaust Survivor in need.**