

## PENDANT

One of the hardships that children who were hidden in the Holocaust were forced to deal with was the dramatic changes occurring in their lives, most of all as they separated from their parents and began to live in their rescuers' homes. These were families they did not always know, with an unfamiliar culture, identity and family life, in many cases extremely different from their own.

Marta Goren was born in Czortków, then in eastern Poland. Her mother smuggled her out of the town's ghetto and hid her in the basement of the pharmacy at which she worked. Later, she took refuge in Warsaw under an assumed identity with the Schultz family, whom Marta did not know.

*On Sunday, I went with the whole family to pray at church. I was awed by the hushed silence and the opulence of the pictures and statues. I saw that everyone that entered the sanctuary approached the altar, got down on his knees, bowed and crossed himself. And I, Kristina Gryniewicz, decided to prove how devout I was. I got down on my knees as soon as we entered the church and walked on my knees all the way to the altar. When we returned home, Mrs. Czaplińska put ointment on my knees, which I had rubbed raw, and placed a chain with a pendant of the Madonna and her son around my neck.*

*[...]*

*After the months in the cellar, I found it difficult to get used to the sunlight. I felt that Mother was very tense and I wanted to make things easier for her, but I was scared. Where was I going? Who were these people? How could they be trusted? Did she know them?*

*And suddenly, the train stopped and a lot of people got off.*

*“That’s Lidka”, Mother said pointing to a beautiful girl standing on the platform, and she smiled at me.*

*I felt calmer. Lidka approached us with a smile, she and mother kissed, she stroked my hair, and immediately removed the ribbon with the cross from around my neck.*

*“Christians never wear a cross on a ribbon, only on a chain”, she said, handing it to Mother. Mother quickly thrust it into her bag, and Lidka added, “When you come to us, we’ll make sure you have the right kind of chain”.*

Marta kept the pendant she received from Mrs. Czaplínska, her rescuer, throughout the war and even throughout the long postwar journey from an orphanage to a difficult beginning in Israel. It was a religious symbol that at first was intended to be part of her disguise and the hiding of her Jewish identity, but over time it became a sincere expression of faith; Marta wished to adopt the Christian identity of her rescuers, and in so doing become part of the Schultz family. The pendant carries within it the story of Marta’s wanderings. Firstly, the separation from her mother and her Jewish identity, then her integration into a new family, until the end of the war, when she was traumatically forced to leave her rescuer and head out on a journey of renewed Jewish identity and building a family. It is interesting to think about what motivated Marta to save the pendant for so many years.



A Christian pendant worn by Marta Winter (Goren) while living under a false identity in Warsaw during the war.  
Yad Vashem Artifacts Collection, courtesy of Marta (Winter) Goren, Rehovot, Israel.