Leo Lubich's Mother Malka Lubich

My mother, Malka Lubich, née Gandlina. This photo was taken in Kiev around 1909.

My parents, Pinkhus and Malka Lubich, were born in a small town in the Zhytomir region in the 1880s. I don't remember where they came from.

My mother learned to stuff cigarettes and sold them in bulk. But her main occupation was housekeeping and raising children, of course.

My parents grew up in religious families where Jewish traditions were observed. I don't know how they met. My parents got married in 1908. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah at the synagogue. After the wedding my parents moved to Kiev.

There were four children in the family: my older sister Maria, born in 1910, myself, born in 1912, and our brothers: Jacob, born in 1915, and Aron, born in 1919.

Our family observed Jewish traditions. We didn't eat pork and followed kosher rules at home. I can't remember any details about the Saturday celebrations, but I do remember that my father never worked on Saturdays. My mother lit candles and prayed over them on Friday and we had a festive dinner. The food on Saturday was made a day before and was left in the oven to stay warm. But my parents weren't truly religious. They never prayed, but my father had a tallit, tefillin, and religious books in Hebrew - there were no other books at home. He had a seat at the synagogue at the bottom of Andreevskiy Spusk. He went there on Saturdays and on holidays with his tallit and tefillin on.