

**MARIA GORETTI**  
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the courage to resist any temptation to sinful conduct. Let others be led closer to Jesus and Mary by my example. Oh Little Saint who wanted to be popular only with your Divine Master and His Blessed Mother, help me to imitate you. Amen.

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be  
St. Maria Goretti, pray for us!*

### Prayer Before a Date

Dear Little Saint Maria Goretti! Teach me that God must be my first love and that all other love is based on Him and Him alone. Obtain for me the grace to cease toying with the occasions of sin and to remember that my body and the bodies of all in grace are temples of the Holy Spirit, destined someday for a glorious resurrection. Through your beautiful example, teach me the value and dignity of Christian modesty. Grant that I may never be the occasion of dragging others into Hell, by suggestive words or evil deeds of any kind. Through the merits of your Martyrdom, obtain for me the grace to turn aside from sin, no matter what the cost, so that one day I may enjoy Heaven with you and all the other saints. Amen.

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## MARIA GORETTI

**Feast Day: 6 July. Patroness of Modern Youth.**

### Life in Brief

#### **October 16, 1890**

Maria Goretti is born in Corinaldo, Italy to Luigi Goretti and Assunta Carlini.

#### **October 17, 1890**

Maria is baptized in the Church of San Francesco in Corinaldo.

#### **October 4, 1896**

Maria is confirmed by Mons. Giulio Boschi, Bishop of Senigallia.

#### **June 16, 1901**

Maria receives her First Holy Communion in the church of Conca, today called Borgo Montello.



**July 5, 1902**

Maria is mortally wounded at 15.30 by her neighbor, Alessandro Serenelli, who attacked her with intent to sexually abuse her. He was 20 years old.

**July 6, 1902**

Maria dies at the age of 11 years, 9 months and 21 days, after forgiving Alessandro.

**May 31, 1935**

Commencement of the informative process at Albano.

**April 27, 1947**

Maria is beatified by the Roman Catholic Church.

**June 24, 1950**

Maria Goretti is declared Saint in St. Peter's Square by Pope Pius XII, becoming the youngest officially recognized Roman Catholic saint ever.

Maria Goretti died a martyr before her twelfth birthday. Young as she was, she made a choice, a choice based on her faith. The Church holds up to

**Prayer to St. Maria Goretti**

Oh Saint Maria Goretti who, strengthened by God's grace, did not hesitate even at the age of twelve to shed your blood and sacrifice life itself to defend your virginal purity, look graciously on the unhappy human race which has strayed far from the path of eternal salvation. Teach us all, and especially youth, with what courage and promptitude we should flee for the love of Jesus anything that could offend Him or stain our souls with sin. Obtain for us from our Lord victory in temptation, comfort in the sorrows of life, and the grace which we earnestly beg of thee (here insert intention), and may we one day enjoy with thee the imperishable glory of Heaven. Amen.

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be  
St. Maria Goretti, pray for us!*

**Prayer Before a Dance or Party**

Dear Saint Maria Goretti! The world teaches that we must please others in order to be popular. Conscience demands that I please God more than one who asks an evil thing in the name of false love. Teach me by your example to instill into others a real respect for modesty and purity. Through your powerful intercession, help me to make of this evening an occasion for helping others to become spiritually stronger. Grant that others may see in me reason to change their ways, if that be necessary, and that I may have

- 4) *Marital love and sex have a wondrous power permitted by God to create human life through the sacred and holy union of husband and wife. I respect this co-creative role God has entrusted to me when I value myself and my sexuality as a sign of God's loving relationship with me and with the person I will someday choose to love and marry.*
- 5) *I will seek guidance from St. Theresa the Little Flower when making difficult personal decisions in life. I strive to learn more to understand the Spiritual Childhood and the Little Way of the Little Flower and practise them in everything I do.*
- 6) *I desire to be a good Christian, committed by action and example, to prayer, chastity, forgiveness and love of God in the Eucharist, like St. Maria Goretti, model for today's youth.*

***Mother Mary, keep me Chaste and Pure!  
St. Theresa the Little Flower, pray for me!  
St. Maria Goretti, pray for me!***

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(signature)

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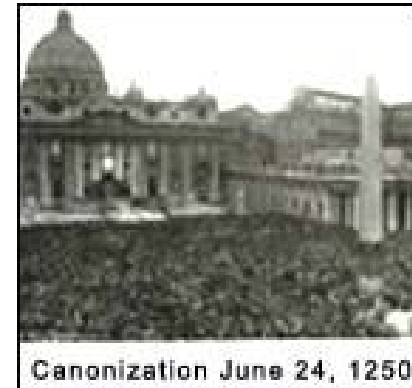
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the world the life, death and the faith of Maria Goretti.



The daughter of humble sharecroppers, Maria and her family moved to the little town of Ferriere, Italy in 1899 in search of work .Desperately seeking to support his family, Luigi Goretti struck up a bargain with Signor Serenelli, who had a son named Alessandro. The two families lived together in a building (see photo) owned by Count Mazzolini.

Maria quickly matured in grace and holiness in the eyes of friends and other acquaintances. After losing her father to malaria, she developed great strength and maturity. Her charming modesty, cheerful obedience and the serious, but free

acceptance of a hundred thankless home chores distinguished her from the other children who would play in the dusty streets of Ferriere.

Perhaps the highlight of her life was her First Holy Communion, which she dutifully prepared for and awaited with great anticipation. She truly seemed to be advancing "in wisdom, and age and grace before God and men."



Lured by the passions of his day and nurturing the dark side of his soul with impious reading and thoughts, Alessandro Serenelli had been a thorn in lovely Maria's side. He propositioned her on several occasions and harassed her with impure suggestions. On July 5, 1902, he would be denied no longer. As she once again rebuffed his sexual advance, shouting, "No! It is a sin! God does not want it!", Alexander lunged to the deed, stabbing Maria 14 times.

## MODESTY PLEDGE



## I WAS CREATED AS A UNIQUE CHILD OF GOD

- 1) *I am special! My body was made in God's image and how I choose to act, what I choose to wear, to watch or listen to, enhances or diminishes the virtues of my personality.*
- 2) *I will cherish my body and sexuality as gifts from God and give myself time to grow, mature, and understand who I am and what God wants me to be in my life. I will take pride in being chaste because it pleases God and offers me the greatest freedom in life.*
- 3) *The Blessed Mother, by her holiness and modesty, radiated a grace, dignity and beauty that was a perfect reflection of our loving God. When I try to imitate Mary like St. Theresa the Little Flower and St. Maria Goretti, I can inspire others my age and be a role model through my behaviour and example.*

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"Little Maria was really my light, my protectress; with her help, I behaved well during the 27 years of prison and tried to live honestly when I was again accepted among the members of society.



The Brothers of St. Francis, Capuchins from Marche, welcomed me with angelic charity into their monastery as a brother, not as a servant. I've been living with their community for 24 years, and

now I am serenely waiting to witness the vision of God, to hug my loved ones again, and to be next to my Guardian Angel and her dear mother, Assunta.

"I hope this letter that I wrote can teach others the happy lesson of avoiding evil and of always following the right path, like little children. I feel that religion with its precepts is not something we can live without, but rather it is the real comfort, the real strength in life and the only safe way in every circumstance, even the most painful ones of life."

*Signature, Alessandro Serenelli*

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Doctors in Nettuno tried to save Maria's life to no avail. After 20 painful hours of suffering during which she forgave and prayed for Alessandro, Maria entered Heaven fortified with the Last Sacraments. Her last earthly gaze rested upon a picture of the Blessed Mother. It was July 6, 1902.

Almost fifty years later on June 24, 1950, Pope Pius XII stood on the steps of St. Peter's in Rome and pronounced Maria Goretti a Saint and Martyr of the Universal Church to half a million people. He proposed her as **the Patroness of Modern Youth and set July 6th as her feast Day**. Her mother, and her murderer, attended the canonization ceremony together.

**This was the triumph of the little girl who loved God and hated sin.**

Maria Goretti had led a very ordinary life. But in spite of her simplicity, her great faith and love for God made her truly extraordinary.

Many recorded miracles, both spiritual and physical, have been worked through St. Maria Goretti's intercession. Worldwide, there are many places of devotion to St. Maria Goretti, such as

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the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Graces and St. Maria Goretti in Nettuno, Italy, pictured here.



<http://www.mariagoretti.org/mariabio.htm>

**Maria Goretti's heroic story of love and forgiveness would not be complete without one of its first miraculous fruits: the conversion of Alessandro Serenelli, Maria's murderer.**

Immediately after his brutal assault on young Maria Goretti, Alessandro was imprisoned temporarily in Nettuno and then transferred to Regina Coeli prison in Rometo stand trial.

Forty years later, on June 24, 1950, Maria was canonized at St. Peter's basilica in Rome, with Alessandro's heart now firmly converted to the Lord. A miraculous fruit of Maria's life, indeed!

***Alessandro Serenelli died on May 6th, 1970 in the Capuchin convent of Macerata. He left the following testimony, dated May 5, 1961, as his spiritual legacy:***

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"I'm nearly 80 years old. I'm about to depart. Looking back at my past, I can see that in my early youth, I chose a bad path which led me to ruin myself.

"My behavior was influenced by print, mass-media and bad examples which are followed by the majority of young people without even thinking. And I did the same. I was not worried.

"There were a lot of generous and devoted people who surrounded me, but I paid no attention to them because a violent force blinded me and pushed me toward a wrong way of life.

"When I was 20 years-old, I committed a crime of passion. Now, that memory represents something horrible for me. Maria Goretti, now a Saint, was my good Angel, sent to me through Providence to guide and save me. I still have impressed upon my heart her words of rebuke and of pardon. She prayed for me, she interceded for her murderer. Thirty years of prison followed. "If I had been of age, I would have spent all my life in prison. I accepted to be condemned because it was my own fault.