

Saint Maria Goretti Monday 6 July



About Saint Maria Goretti - 1890-1902

Saint Maria Goretti was a child martyr. She was the third of seven children, born into a peasant family living near Corinaldo in the province of Ancona, Italy. Since the family experienced great poverty, they later moved to a village near Anzio.

Maria's father entered a partnership with a man named Serenelli, in order to provide for his family. So, the family shared a house with Serenelli and his two sons. One of these sons was named Alessandro. Maria's father died when she was ten years old.

Maria impressed everyone with her radiant purity, and she was a pious, kind and helpful person. Alessandro lacked self-control and was very much attracted to Maria. She resisted his attentions, but that just made Alessandro desire Maria even more. She narrowly escaped a serious sexual assault, which Alessandro made her keep secret with a threat of murder hanging over her head.

A month later, Alessandro organized things so that he would be alone with Maria in the house and armed himself with a dagger. She tried to resist him, imploring him to think about his soul. He put a handkerchief in her mouth, tied her up and stabbed her fourteen times.

She was taken to hospital in a horse-drawn ambulance and died within twenty-four hours.

Maria's murderer was tried and sentenced to thirty years' penal servitude. He experienced dreams of Maria during his time in goal.

Maria was beatified in 1927 and Alessandro was released a year later. He then received Communion side by side Maria's mother on Christmas Day 1937 and they spent Christmas Day together.

Maria was canonized in 1950 and her Mother was present at the ceremony. (The first time a mother was present for the canonization of her child.) There is some speculation as to whether Alessandro was present or not. He died in 1970.

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What can we learn from Saint Maria's life?

How pertinent is this Saint to us in this day and age, with all that has come to light with sexual abuse in the world. Maria remained pure to the end. Even on her deathbed she was still pleading with her murderer not to go down the path he chose because it was the wrong thing to do.

The other thing we can learn from Saint Maria Goretti (and her family) is their capacity to forgive. Maria forgave Alessandro on her deathbed and her mother did too – welcoming him into her home and sitting right beside him at the Altar of the Lord.

We, like Saint Maria Goretti are called to stand up for and proclaim what is right and to call people out when they are doing the wrong thing. They may not like what they hear, but we have done our part. Bad things happen when good people keep silent.

Like, Maria we must also forgive and pray even for our worst enemy. The Lord loves us and we must share his love by our capacity of forgiveness, so that we can worship Him authentically and witness to Him by our unconditional love. The Lord loved even those who crucified Him – **“forgive them, Father,”** he said – **“they do not know what they are doing.”** Let us show people the way to Jesus by forgiving the wrongs of others and also forgiving ourselves when we mess things up. We never know the effect of our prayers. God has an interesting way of hearing our prayers, and no prayer is ever wasted.

Collect

O God, author of innocence and lover of chastity,
who bestowed the grace of martyrdom
on your handmaid, the Virgin Saint Maria Goretti, in her youth,
grant, we pray, through her intercession,
that, as you gave her a crown for her steadfastness,
so we, too, may be firm in obeying your commandments.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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Gospel John 12: 24-26

If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I tell you, most solemnly,

unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,

it remains only a single grain;

but if it dies,

it yields a rich harvest.

Anyone who loves his life loses it;

anyone who hates his life in this world

will keep it for the eternal life.

If a man serves me, he must follow me,

wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.'

Antiphon

Rv 7: 17

The Lamb who is at the centre of the throne

will lead them to the springs of the waters of life.

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Hymn for the Memorial of Saint Maria Goretti

1. Saint Maria Go-retti,
you have shown us how on earth
purity can guide our footsteps,
prepare us for heav'nly birth.
Lord, Maria chose right not wrong,
so she joined the heav'nly throng.

2. Saint Maria Go-retti,
you walked your life in Christ's path;
you pleaded with your attacker
not to suffer the law's wrath.
Lord, Maria chose right not wrong,
so she joined the heav'nly throng.

3. Saint Maria Go-retti,
You showed God's love knows no bounds,
forgiving the wrong done to you
as you suffered fatal wounds.
Lord, Maria chose right not wrong,
so she joined the heav'nly throng.

4. With forgiveness may we pray for
those who do not treat us well,
so Christ's Good News always will be
that which to the world we tell.
Lord, Maria chose right not wrong,
like her, for you may we long.

87.87.87

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono

Music Links to the Scripture Readings

[Unless a Grain of Wheat](#) - Bernadette Farrell

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