

St. Maria Goretti



The Story of Alessandro Serenelli

“Maria’s forgiveness saved me.” – A. Serenelli

Alessandro Serenelli was born into a family well acquainted with poverty and hardship. Shortly after he was born, his own mother attempted to drown him. She died several months later, while in a mental asylum. His brother was also interned in an asylum, where he also died.

Alessandro’s father, Giovanni, was an alcoholic who struggled to provide for his children. He moved the family multiple times trying to earn a living as a manual laborer. Unfortunately, his alcoholism prevented his holding down a job for very long. It was while working as a sharecropper that he met Luigi Goretti, father of Maria Goretti. Since both families lived in poverty, they decided to partner together and attempt to work as a team for those hiring sharecroppers.

Both men eventually decided to move their families to a small town called Le Ferriere di Conca, near Nettuno, about 60 km. south of Rome. By this time, Giovanni Serenelli had only his son Alessandro living with him. They found work, and lived in a house with the Gorettis on one side and the Serenellis on the other, and a kitchen in the middle.

Within 2 years, when Alessandro was 18 years old, Maria’s father died of malaria. His own father was increasingly gripped by alcohol, and Alessandro became more and more reclusive and withdrawn.

Alessandro began to make lewd jokes and gestures towards Maria. These were followed by repeated attempts to seduce her. Maria wanted nothing to do with Alessandro and rejected one of his propositions. Knowing he was capable of violence, she was careful never to be alone with him. But Alessandro devised a plan to approach the house in the middle of the day, when Maria would be alone and everyone else would be at work.

When Maria found herself trapped in the house alone with Alessandro, she resisted him with all her strength. In fact, her resistance was so great that he was unable to rape her. In a fit of rage, Alessandro stabbed Maria 14 times with a file. Maria died 24 hours later.

Alessandro was sentenced to 30 years in prison. There, he was kept in isolation as he was prone to physical violence against other inmates.

One night, six years into his prison sentence, Maria appeared to him. She appeared in a garden picking 14 white lilies, and handed them to him one by one. This gesture of forgiveness, this act of love, filled him with light and the Holy Spirit. He

was immediately contrite for what he had done. He finished the rest of his sentence in tranquility. In fact, his behavior became so docile, and the transformation of his person was so dramatic, that he was released three years early. After his release he sought the forgiveness of Maria’s mother. He joined the Capuchin Franciscans and, as a lay brother, worked as a gardener, porter, and general labourer. He died in the peace of Christ, with the love and admiration of those that knew him, at the Capuchin convent at Macerata, Italy, on 6 May 1970.

Following his death, the Capuchin friars with whom he lived found a sealed envelope among his personal effects. It was his spiritual testament, written in the form of an open letter to the world. It contains an appeal that all follow the way of Christ. It also paints a dramatic and touching picture of a man who was able to regain his dignity through the generous mercy that those whom he had wounded extended to him:

I am now almost 80 years old. I am close to the end of my days. Looking back at my past, I recognize that in my early youth I followed a false road—an evil path that led to my ruin. Through the content of printed magazines, immoral shows, and bad examples in the media, I saw the majority of the young people of my day following evil without even thinking twice. Unworried, I did the same thing.

There were faithful and practicing Christian believers around me, but I ignored them. I was blinded by a brute impulse that pushed me down the wrong way of living.

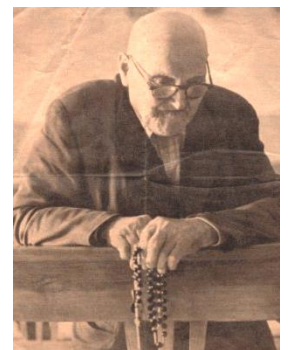
At the age of 20, I committed a crime of passion, the memory of which still horrifies me today. Maria Goretti, now a saint, was my good angel whom God placed in my path to save me. Her words both of rebuke and forgiveness are still imprinted in my heart. She prayed for me, interceding for her killer. Thirty years in prison followed.

Resigned, I atoned for my sin. Little Maria was truly my light, my protector. With her help, I served those 27 years in prison well. When society accepted me back as a member, I tried to live honestly. With angelic charity, the sons of St. Francis, the minor Capuchins of the Marches, welcomed me among them not as a servant, but as a brother. I have lived with them for 24 years. Now I look serenely to the time in which I will be admitted to the vision of God, to embrace my dear ones once again, and to be close to my guardian angel, Maria Goretti, and her dear mother, Assunta.

May all who read this letter of mine desire to avoid evil and follow the good. May all believe with the faith of little children that religion with its precepts is necessary for life. It is true comfort, and the only sure way in all of life’s circumstances, even in the most painful.

Peace and all good.

Alessandro Serenelli
Macerata, Italy, 5 May 1961



Focus on the Word

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Isaiah 55.10-11; Romans 8.18-23; Matthew 13.1-13

O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, so that they may return to the right path, give all who are accounted Christians the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive after all that does it honour. Amen.

Stewardship Envelope Numbers reassignment

Parishioners are advised that, as we resume pre-pandemic procedures, our SUNDAY ENVELOPE SYSTEM needs to be put in order. Effective immediately, any Parishioners who have Sunday Envelope boxes with **numbers higher than 1300** will be asked to return their boxes to the Office to be assigned a new number. Please cooperate in this effort, as the boxes for 2024 will be delivered after Labour Day. We will need time to prepare the labels so the boxes can be picked up in October.

ShareLife 2023

ShareLife is Living the Gospel by respecting and caring for life at all stages!

Please make a sacrificial gift to ShareLife.

Our Parish goal for 2022 is: \$52,000.00

A Freewill offering will be taken on: **16 July**.

Each week, we have highlighted a ShareLife Agency in our Announcements. COVENANT HOUSE, CANADIAN FOOD FOR CHILDREN, ROSE OF SHARON and other agencies all make a difference in our community. Help us reach our goal! Your generosity will bring compassion and hope to others.



16 July: ShareLife Appeal, Freewill Offering

On 16 July, the 2nd collection will be the Freewill Offering for our annual ShareLife Appeal, supporting 33 Catholic agencies and 10 grant recipients that respect the sanctity of all human life.

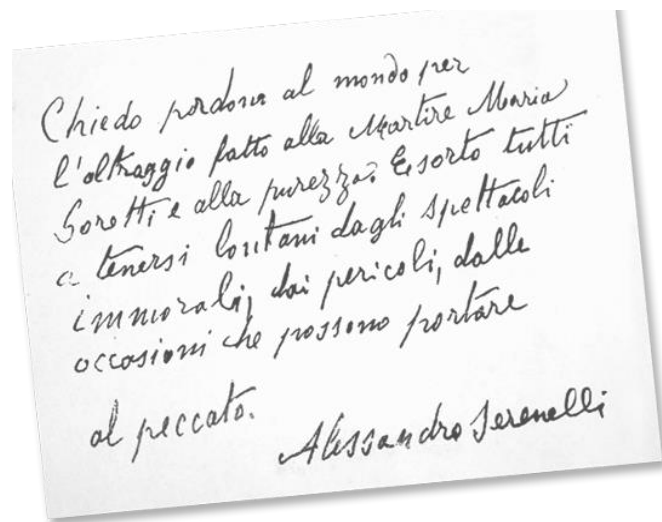
COMING UP

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23 July	Mission Co-op Sunday: Fr. Sampath , representing the Diocese of Galle, Sri Lanka
30 July	2 nd Collection: Maintenance
1-6 Aug.	► WORLD YOUTH DAY, Lisbon, Portugal
5 Aug.	TALENT & KARAOKE NIGHT (6 – 9 pm)
7 Aug.	Infant Baptism Parent Godparent Meeting (7:40 pm)
13 Aug.	2 nd Collections: Canadian Missions
15 Aug.	Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
16 Aug.	Annual CATHOLIC CEMETERY Masses
25 Aug.	Wedding: Grisales – D'Souza (10:30 am)
26 Aug.	Wedding: Kranz – Lago (2:00 pm)
27 Aug.	2 nd Collection: Maintenance

Website stmariagoretti.archtoronto.org

For more details on Parish activities, see the website bulletin.



Parish Week † Sunday, 16 July 2023

Saturday, 15 July / St. Bonaventure, bishop & doctor

8.00 am Mass: † Norah & Anthony Teixeira (Lallajee family)

5.00 pm Mass: Int. Alwina Fernando (friends)

SUNDAY, 16 JULY / 15-A

■ Homilist: Fr. Edwin Galea

■ 2nd Collection: **ShareLife Freewill**

9.00 am Mass: † Cyrilda Alagaratnam (Shirani Hemachandra)

10.30 am Mass: † Ernesto, Lydia & Justino Rodas (family)

12.00 pm Mass: † Lina & Giancarlo Vaccaro (family)

7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

Monday 17 July

8.00 am Mass: † Thanksgiving (Lydia Alibangbang)

7.00 pm Mass: † Anar Adatia (SVDP, SMG Conference)

Tuesday, 18 July

8.00 am Mass: † Elmer James (Corine Maulion)

Wednesday 19 July

8.00 am Mass: † Virgilio Miclat (family)

Thursday, 20 July / St. Apollinaris, bishop & martyr

8.00 am Mass: † Antonio Guerrero (Teodora)

Friday, 21 July / St. Lawrence of Brindisi, priest

8.00 am Mass: † Cornelio Sardua (Chita)

Saturday, 22 July / St. Mary Magdalene

8.00 am Mass: Int. Henry Carter (family)

5.00 pm Mass: Int. Tessie Mendonca (friends)

SUNDAY, 23 JULY / 16-A

■ Homilist: Fr. Edwin Galea

■ Mission Co-op Sunday

■ Parish Bazaar (9 am - 2 pm)

9.00 am Mass: † Audrey Hussey (Alice)

10.30 am Mass: † Leonora Figueroa (family)

12.00 pm Mass: † Patrick De Caires (Peter & Cheryl)

7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

Parish Bazaar 23 July, 9 am – 2 pm

Our Parish is holding a Bazaar on Sunday, 23 July, beginning after the 9.00 am Mass and continuing to 2.00 pm. **Krispy Kreme** donuts will be on sale: \$10 a dozen. The proceeds will support ShareLife. Vendors: To reserve a table, call: **Lillian**, 647-909-6425.

ShareLife Agency List

All ShareLife-funded organizations share the Catholic tradition of serving the entire community regardless of religious affiliation.

In addition to the regular ShareLife Agencies, there are agencies that receive Grants-in Aid to assist their work.

THE DEVEBER INSTITUTE FOR BIOETHICS AND SOCIAL RESEARCH † The DeVeber Institute conducts and disseminates research connected to human life in its biological, social and ethical dimensions. Research is selected for study and dissemination based on emerging medical, technological and social developments. In undertaking this work, the Institute strives to highlight the inherent dignity of every human life, as well as the resulting obligation to treat human persons as ends in themselves – not as means for the ends of others, or as utilitarian ‘goods’. The deVeber Institute anchors all of its work in this foundational perspective.

GOOD SHEPHERD CENTRE † This Centre in Toronto provides services to homeless, disadvantaged and marginalized people. ShareLife supports the 25-bed Drug and Rehabilitation Recovery Enrichment Program (DARE), a post-detoxification and pretreatment program offering homeless men with addictions a safe place to live while awaiting treatment. DARE provides counselling that prepares clients for residential or out-patient treatment for addictions. Clients live in a secure dormitory, offering each other support and encouragement.

TORONTO RIGHT TO LIFE † We envision a country where the intrinsic dignity of every human life is valued and the human rights of all human beings are protected. We are a human rights organization that aims to change the country by reaching and transforming Toronto and the GTA. We educate schools, churches and community groups on abortion and assisted suicide, to change hearts and minds, and save lives by providing scientific evidence and research, and learning from past successful social reformers.

ST. JOHN PAUL THE GREAT FAMILY CENTRE † Located at St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish, the St. John Paul the Great Family Centre provides regular after-school programs for youth and activities for seniors.

NEW BEGINNINGS † This is a ministry developed to meet the needs of those who are separated, divorced, widowed or who are enduring a significant loss. Through various programs, participants have the opportunity to move through the stages of healing, leading to the beginning of a more fulfilling life.

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY † The office coordinates pastoral and sacramental care to Catholic patients in large acute care hospitals. The office also provides ongoing consultation and support for priest chaplains and Catholic lay chaplains working in the hospital setting. The focus of our work is to assist chaplains and local pastors in their effort to provide support to inpatients and their families during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. The goal of the ministry is to make the church present to Catholics in the hospital setting.



WYD Lisbon to host First World Meeting of Evangelizers and Digital Missionaries at Catholic Influencers Festival

The Catholic Influencers Festival will be a moment to celebrate together, share ideas and testimonies, pray, and sing.

Martin Moriz Square in Lisbon will serve as the venue for the first world meeting of digital evangelizers and missionaries at the Catholic Influencers Festival, organized by “The Church Listens to You,” an initiative that arises from digital missionaries in response to Pope Francis’ call for the Church to conduct the Synod of Synodality, with the intention of extending it to digital environments as well.

This event aims to celebrate and express gratitude for the great missionary work carried out daily by these influencers and digital missionaries from the five continents, who transmit the Gospel through their social media platforms.

On 4 August, the Cristonauts Park, located in Martin Moniz Square in Lisbon, will host this festival, bringing together all evangelizers and digital missionaries present at the WYD.

The Catholic Influencers Festival will be a moment to celebrate together, share testimonies and experiences, pray, and sing. Personalities from all continents will share their music and experiences: Hakuna Group Music (Spain), Father Rob Galea (Australia), Pitter Di Laura (Brazil), Pablo Martínez (Argentina), Missionarios Shalom (Brazil), among others. Additionally, Cardinal Maradiaga and Monsignor Lucio Adrián Ruiz, Secretary of the Dicastery for Communication, will accompany them.







Fr. Elias prepares to cut his 40th
Ordination Anniversary cake, 1 July.



Tyler Joseph Gilbert,
25 June



Let the Earth breathe



