

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 His own father was increasingly gripped by alcohol, and Alessandro became more and more reclusive and withdrawn.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 that 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.

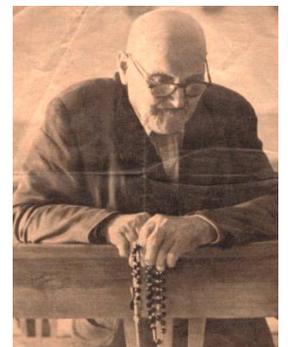
At the age of 20, I committed a crime of passion, the memory of which still horrifies me today. Maria Goretti, now a saint, was my good angel whom God placed in my path to save me. Her words both of rebuke and forgiveness are still imprinted in my heart. She prayed for me, interceding for her killer.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

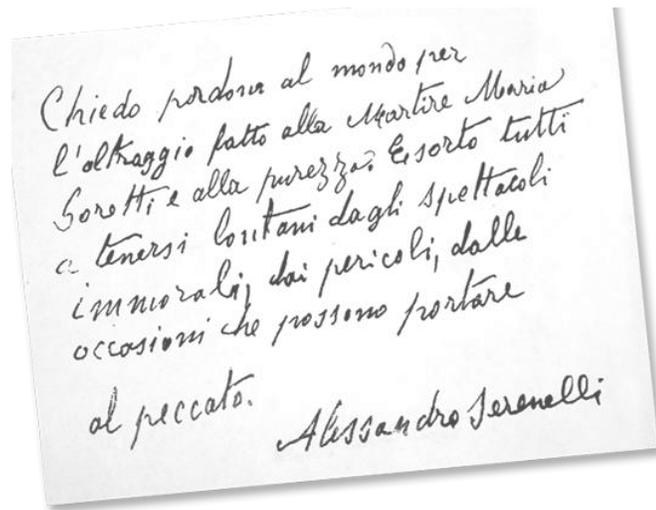
Resigned, I atoned for my sin. Little Maria was truly my light, my protector. With her help, I served those 27 years in prison well. When society accepted me back as a member, I tried to live honestly. With angelic charity, the sons of St. Francis, the minor Capuchins of the Marches, welcomed me among 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 C

Deuteronomy 30.10-14; Colossians 1.15-20; Luke 10.25-37

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.

Parish Week / Sunday, 13 July 2025

Saturday, 12 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Caroline & Cyril Bastiampillai (family)
- 11.00 am Memorial Mass: † John Walsh
- 1.00 pm Wedding: Christopher Bertucci & Brianna Bush
- 5.00 pm Mass: Int. Thanksgiving (Rajiv Biswas)

SUNDAY, 13 JULY / 15-C

- Homilist: Deacon Ramon Villardo
- 2nd Collection: ShareLife Freewill

- 9.00 am Mass: † Gabriel & Francis Andreas (Charles)
- 10.30 am Mass: † Ernesto, Lydia & Justino Rodas (family)
- 12.00 pm Mass: Int. Alwina Fernando (friends)
- 7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

Monday, 14 July

- 8.00 am Mass: Int. Helen Serneo on her Birthday
- 7.00 pm Mass: † Matty & Richard D'Souza (family)

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

- 8.00 am Mass: † Cyrilda Alagaratnam
(Shirani Hemachandra & Leslie Alagaratnam)

Wednesday, 16 July / Our Lady of Mount Carmel

- 8.00 am Mass: † Deceased members of Vaccaro & Cilento, Prezio & Altomare, and Cosco families

Thursday, 17 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Dian D'Lima (Renny & family)

Friday, 18 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Norah Teixeira (family)

Saturday, 19 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Isaac Gallego (Gloria)
- 5.00 pm Mass: † Mike D'Mello (Jane Abraham)

SUNDAY, 20 JULY / 16-C

- Homilist: Fr. Edwin Galea

- St. Vincent de Paul fundraiser: 50/50 Tickets

- 9.00 am Mass: † Magdalena Lamila (Irma Pisciola & family)
- 10.30 am Mass: † Visitacion & Rodolfo Leal (family)
- 12.00 pm Mass: Int. Cameron family
(Melissa Mask & Wanda Kawalinska)
- 7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

ShareLife 2025

So far, we have raised: \$ 29,867.00
toward our 2025 goal of: \$ 75,000.00



You help young parents raise their children with love and care

ROSE OF SHARON is one of the agencies you support through ShareLife. Your kindness ensures that young parents are equipped with the tools they need before and after childbirth to raise their children with love.

In the words of **Deanne Kukulewich**, the Executive Director, ROSE OF SHARON:

"Your generosity helps us provide crucial resources; practical supports including food, baby formula, and clothing; guidance through our counsellors; and a supportive environment for these individuals during a pivotal and challenging phase of their lives."

Our ShareLife **Freewill** offering is this Sunday, 13 July. Please give generously, and help us to reach our goal. Thank you for your support for ShareLife.

The Knights of Columbus Upcoming events



26 July **Car Wash**, 12 noon – 4 pm,
with entertainment provided by the Youth Ministry

Parish Jubilee Pilgrimage 2 August

On Saturday, 2 August, our parish will be holding a local pilgrimage to three Churches in the city to celebrate the JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE. We will meet at our Parish, begin with Holy Mass, and then travel by TTC to St. Paul Basilica, St. Michael Cathedral Basilica and St. Patrick Church.

For more details and to sign up, call: **Lillian**, 647-909-6425.

13 July: ShareLife Appeal, Freewill Offering

On 13 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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- 26 July KOC & Youth Ministry Car Wash (12 – 4 pm)
- 27 July **2nd Collection: Maintenance**
- 1 Aug. ► Quebec Jubilee Pilgrimage (Montreal & Quebec City)
- 2 Aug. ► Parish Jubilee Pilgrimage (3 Toronto Churches)
- 4 Aug. Infant Baptism Parent/Godparent Meeting (7:40 pm)

Alessandro

An Original Prayerful Poem by Art Rogers

Alessandro, we pray for you.
A moment in your life of wrong
was the price you would have to pay
for the rest of your life
You were led astray by evil,
but after years of regret
Maria has forgiven you; as we do also.

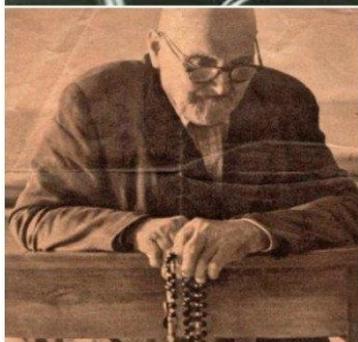
There is much sin the world
brought about by the evil one.
But your deed has been rectified
in the eyes of Maria and God;
anything that will block God's
forgiving love. Please pray for us
as we do for you. Let the light
of Christ wash over our own sins
of darkness to bring us to a place
where all is peace with His love
forever and ever. Amen

Art Rogers 7/7/02, ©Copyright 2002



Above: Mariya Christian with grandsons, 27 June.

Below: Altar Server training, 28 June.





Pandemic procedures, June 2020.



Below: St. Joan of Arc Catholic Academy
Graduation breakfast, 25 June

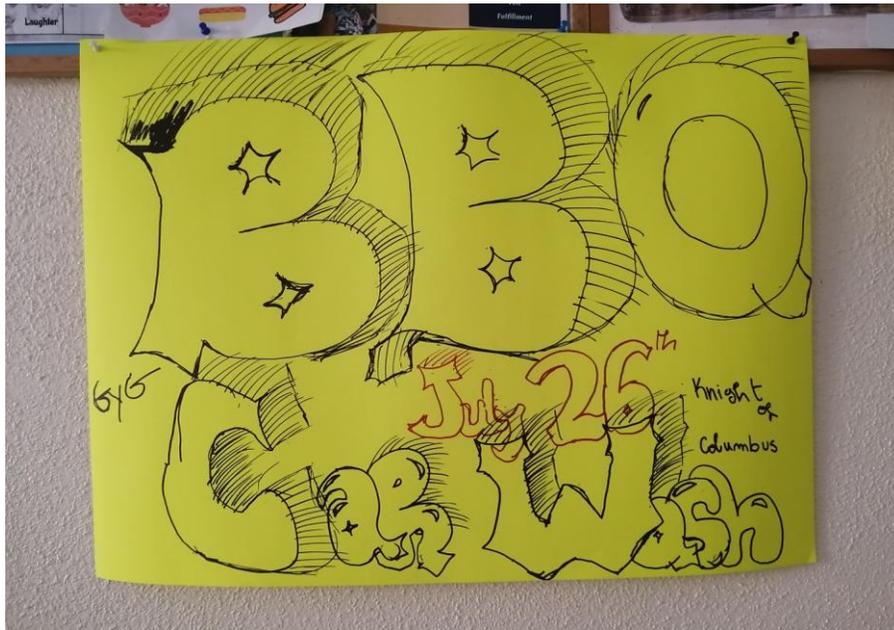


Above: St. Albert Catholic Elementary School
Graduation Exercises, 24 June



Sandra and Rosendo Belen, 45th Wedding Anniversary, 28 June





The Knights of
Columbus

26 July

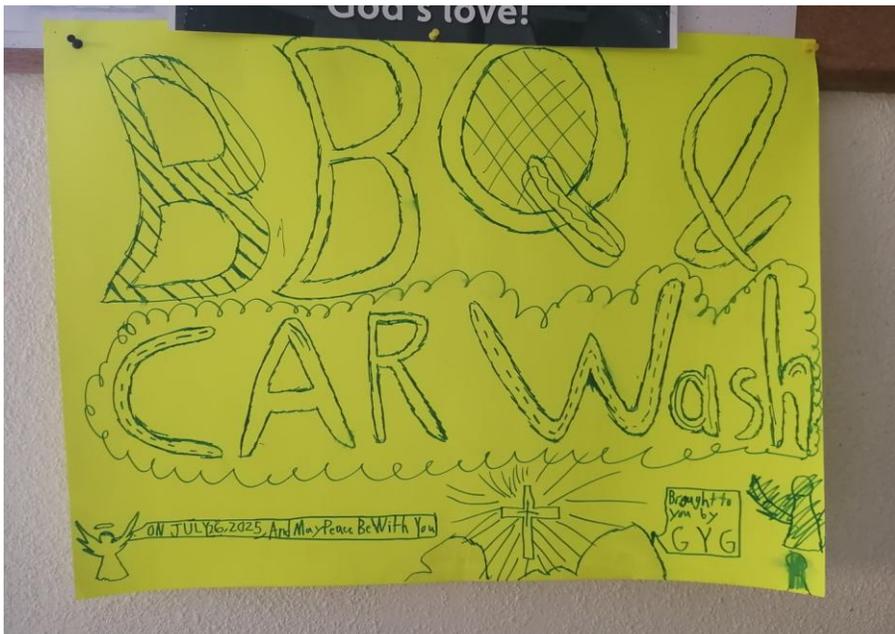
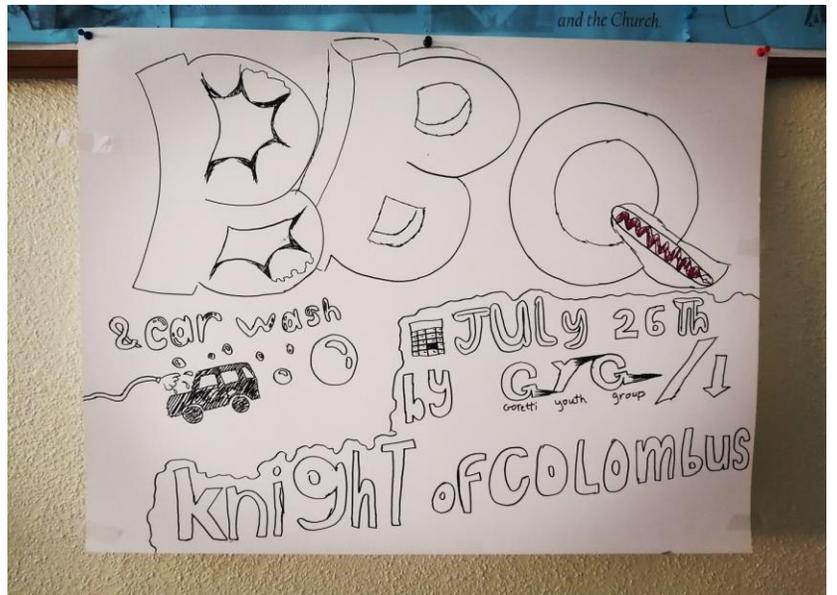
Car Wash,

12 noon – 4 pm,

With Barbecue

and musical entertainment

provided by the Youth Ministry





Above: Spain wildfire, June 2025.

Below: Crab apple tree, November 2024.

