

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 His own father was increasingly gripped by alcohol, and Alessandro became more and more reclusive and withdrawn.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

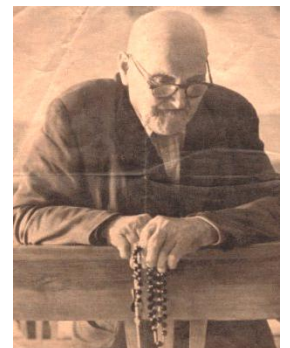
At the age of 20, I committed a crime of passion, the memory of which still horrifies me today. Maria Goretti, now a saint, was my good angel whom God placed in my path to save me. Her words both of rebuke and forgiveness are still imprinted in my heart. She prayed for me, interceding for her killer.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



Parish Week / Sunday, 12 July 2026

Saturday, 11 July / St. Benedict, *abbot*

- 8.00 am Mass: † Souls of WiDoCare clients (Helen Serneo)
3.30 pm Finance Council
7.00 pm Mass: † Edwin Tauro (Annie)

SUNDAY, 12 JULY / 15-A

■ *Homilist: Fr. Edwin Galea*

■ *ShareLife Freewill Collection*

- 9.00 am Mass: † Lydia Marquez (family)
10.30 am Mass: † Matty & Richard D'Souza (Eddie & Theresa)
12.00 pm Mass: Int. Thanksgiving Birthday (Helen Serneo)
7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

Monday, 13 July / St. Henry

- 8.00 am Mass: † Susan & Kevin Edwards (Lucienne Nelson)
7.00 pm Mass: Int. Alwina Fernandes (friends)

Tuesday, 14 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Carmelita Mulla (family)

Wednesday, 15 July / St. Bonaventure, *bishop & doctor*

- 8.00 am Mass: † Cyril Bastiampillai (family)

Thursday, 16 July / Our Lady of Mount Carmel

- 8.00 am Mass: † Lina Vaccaro Cilento (Maria DiMichele)

Friday, 17 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Caroline Bastiampillai (family)
11.00 am ► Ina Grafton Mass

Saturday, 18 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Douglas Vaz (family)
7.00 pm Mass: † Fernando & Beatriz Remedios (family)

SUNDAY, 19 JULY / 16-A

■ *Homilist: Missionary, 2026 Mission Co-op Appeal*

- 9.00 am Mass: † Crescenzo Tisi (family)
10.30 am Mass: † Ernesto, Lydia & Justino Rodas (family)
12.00 pm Mass: Int. Germilina Cruz (family)
7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

Finance Council 11 July

The next Finance Council meeting will be at 3.30 pm on 11 July.

Altar Servers Training series, 11 July

Would you like to help honour God in Church as an ALTAR SERVER? The next *Training Series* is coming up: 11 July 2026.

For details, speak to **Fr. Edwin**: 416-261-0076.

Sisters of Life: THE SOURCE Holy Hour

Visit St. Peter Church, 23 July, 7 – 8 pm

All parishioners who appreciate **Eucharistic Adoration** are welcome to join a Parish visit to St. Peter Church on Thursday, 23 July, for a 7.00 pm Holy Hour with the *Sisters of Life*. The Church is located at 840 Bathurst Street West, on top of the Bathurst subway station. All who wish to travel together may come to our Church at 5.15 pm, for orientation and a Prayer and Blessing at 5.30 pm. We will then walk to the Kennedy Station to take the subway to Bathurst Station, and walk upstairs to St. Peter Church.

Knights of Columbus Upcoming events

July 25, Car Wash & Youth Ministry BBQ; Sept. 19, Dinner Dance.

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.

12 July: *ShareLife* Freewill Offering

On 12 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.

Please give generously, and help us to reach our goal.

Thank you for your support for *ShareLife*.



BLESSING HOME Charity Barbecue 24 & 25 July

Blessing Home is holding a fund raiser barbecue to help build a shelter for the homeless. Please support this organization and attend this BBQ. It will be held at the Playground at 31 Gilder Drive, 24 & 25 July, from 2 – 6 pm. Enjoy a fun-filled afternoon, and help extend a true spirit of caring to those in need in our community. See the notices on the Vestibule bulletin boards.

19 July, Mission Co-Op, T.O.R. Franciscans, India

Our missionary preacher this year is **Fr. Thomas Palakudiyil**, of the Franciscan Friars T.O.R. of India. See the website bulletin for details of the ministry and appeal of this religious community.

COMING UP

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| 26 July | WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS & THE ELDERLY
2 nd Collection: Maintenance |
| 3 Aug. | Wedding: Pineda & Sambo (10:00 am)
Infant Baptism Parent-Godparent Meeting (7:40 pm)
Infant Baptism (1:30 pm)
2 nd Collection: <i>Canadian Missions</i> |
| 9 Aug. | SUMMER FAIR: <i>Krispy Kreme</i> Donuts & more |
| 16 Aug. | St. Helen , mother of Emperor Constantine |
| 23 Aug. | St. Augustine of Hippo |
| 18 Aug. | Wedding: Nagendiram & Antongnanaratnam (10:00 am) |
| 28 Aug. | 2 nd Collection: <i>Maintenance</i> |
| 29 Aug. | Infant Baptism Parent-Godparent Meeting (7:40 pm) |
| 30 Aug. | Sunday School class resumes after Summer break |
| 7 Sept. | ► Beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (St. Louis, USA)
by Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle , delegate of Pope Leo XIV |
| 13 Sept. | ► Pope Leo travels to France, visits
UNESCO in Paris and the Shrine of <i>Notre Dame de Lourdes</i> |
| 24 Sept. | Jubilee Year: ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, 800 th Anniversary of death |
| 25 Sept. | ► Toronto Municipal elections |
| 4 Oct. | ► Beatification of the Georgia Martyrs (Savannah, USA)
by Cardinal Francis Leo , delegate of Pope Leo XIV |
| 26 Oct. | Feast of ST. CECILIA, patroness of Musicians |
| 31 Oct. | |
| 22 Nov. | |

ShareLife 2026

Your help brings hope to All

Rejected by family, but not alone

How Camila lost her home before finding her path

Camila was attending programs at ROSE OF SHARON when she suddenly found herself at risk of homelessness. Counsellors worked with her to complete housing applications. Then, she learned she was pregnant with her second child.

Counsellors provided ongoing support as she considered how to move forward. Despite all of the upheaval in her life, she attended almost every program available to her that year, actively engaging, asking questions, and doing everything within her power to build a better life.

She began to set boundaries and change the way she was communicating with her partner. At the end of the year, she walked out a much stronger woman, with a much clearer sense of who she is, what kind of life she wants for herself and her daughters (now two of them), and how to advocate for herself in order to reach those goals.

She wouldn't be deterred

How Eva and her baby overcame the lockdown



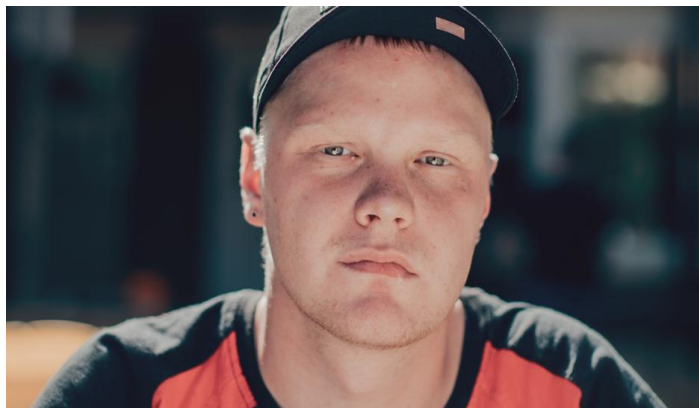
Eighteen-year-old Eva wasn't sure how she could raise a baby while going to school. It seemed like too much, until she got connected with Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers. She worked with a counsellor, participated in parenting classes, and began high school programming tailored to her specific needs, while entrusting her daughter to the childminding staff. She found success at school, which had always been a struggle due to a learning disability.

An overwhelming setback

Then Covid-19 hit and she once again felt overwhelmed. But, with the support of her counsellor and teacher, Eva persevered and graduated in June 2020. Since the students at Rose of Sharon could no longer celebrate together, staff organized a mobile graduation. Eva received her Ontario Secondary School diploma during a brief socially-distanced ceremony, as she was applauded by the people who have loved, supported and encouraged her along the way.

Would he answer the call?

How Alex fought COVID-19 and paralyzing anxiety



Alex is a 34 year-old who struggles with anxiety, which has limited his career opportunities and quality of life. In an attempt to cope with his paralyzing bouts of fear, he bravely attended a walk-in counselling clinic at Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County (CFSSC). The appointment went well and Alex booked a series of follow-up sessions.

Meanwhile, the pandemic had escalated to the point that CFSSC needed to close for face-to-face services. Alex's counsellor called him to schedule a telephone session, but could not reach him. Weeks went by without word from him, despite several more calls.

No longer alone in his struggle

Finally, Alex answered the phone. He shared that he had contracted Covid-19 and had experienced a severe reaction. His anxiety had also worsened due to the pandemic.

Thanks to the counsellor's consistent support, Alex developed the trust needed to overcome several hurdles in his mental health journey. Alex no longer feels alone in his struggle as he learns new tools and techniques to manage his anxiety.

When life takes a dark turn

How Damien got his life back on track through a journey of recovery

Damien had a serious drinking problem, causing him to lose several jobs. His life took a dark turn. He became depressed and spent three weeks surviving on alcohol and cigarettes. Fortunately, Damien's family and friends sent police on him to do a wellness check. Soon after, he entered St. Michael's Homes Treatment Program, where he was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and Substance Use Disorder.

The road to recovery

Because of your generosity to *ShareLife*, he was able to attend a psychotherapy program to help him with his situation. It is through kind and generous people like you that many others, like Damien, receive the help they need to guide them towards change, recovery, and a chance to turn their lives around. Thank you for your constant support and generosity to *ShareLife*.



In 1976, Archbishop Philip Pocock (photo above) founded the SHARELIFE campaign in the Toronto Archdiocese to support the work of Catholic agencies that serve the greater community.

Remember our SHARELIFE Agencies at this critical time

Community / Family Services

Catholic Community Services of York Region, Catholic Cross-cultural Services, Catholic Family Services of Durham, Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin, Catholic Family Services of Simcoe Country, Catholic Family Services of Toronto, *FertilityCare* Toronto, Natural Family Planning Association

People with Special Needs

Mary Centre, *Our Place* Community of Hope, Saint Elizabeth Health Care, St. Bernadette's Family Resources Centre, St. Michael's Homes / Matt Talbot Houses, *Silent Voice* Canada (ministry to the deaf)

Children and Youth

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Catholic Settlement House Day Nursery, *Covenant House*,

Sancta Maria House / **Young Parents:**

Rosalie Hall, Rose of Durham, Rose of Sharon,

Vita Centre / **Seniors:**

Les Centres d'Accueil Heritage, Loyola Arrupe Centre, Providence Healthcare, Society of Sharing

Affiliated Organizations

Camp Ozanam (*Society of St. Vincent de Paul*),

Good Shepherd Ministries, Birthright International

ShareLife 2026 Living the Gospel!

Our *ShareLife* Freewill Appeal is on 12 July
*Today, we reflect on Living the Gospel by
Revering Life at All Stages:
From Conception to Natural Death.*

REVERENCE FOR LIFE has been a core principle of *ShareLife* since our founding in 1976. We recognize the sacredness of life from conception to natural death. We are also committed to Catholic Social Teaching that upholds the dignity of poor and marginalized people, affirming that everyone is created in the image of God. Our agencies apply these values in everything they do.

Thanks to all for your support of our parish 2026 *ShareLife* Appeal. This is a real blessing, a tribute to the generosity of every donor, at a time of great need.

Please make a sacrificial gift to *ShareLife* through our parish campaign.

The *Share Life* Freewill Appeal is this Sunday, 12 July. Please donate, and help us reach our goal! Your generosity will bring compassion and hope to others.

If you have not yet had a chance to join in our Parish Appeal, there is still time to help us reach our goal!

There are still late donations coming in; we need the help of all Parishioners to reach our goal, and to make a difference in the lives of those in real need.

19 July 2026
Annual Mission
Co-op Appeal



The Third Order Regular Franciscan Friars

The Franciscan Friars of the *Third Order Regular* (T.O.R.) operate extensively across India, focusing their mission activities on education, healthcare for the poor, and pastoral care in rural and tribal areas. Their ministries provide vital social support to marginalized people, acting as a beacon of community empowerment.

The mission activities of the T.O.R. in India include:

❑ **Education & Formation:** The Order operates numerous schools, institutes, and minor seminaries, notably located in Meenangadi (*Kerala*), Eluru (*Andhra Pradesh*), and Visakhapatnam. They provide accessible education to disadvantaged youth.

❑ **Healthcare & Elderly Care:** They manage assisted-living facilities like *Assisi Sneha Bhavan* in Palakkad, which provides loving care and shelter to abandoned senior citizens and the frail.

❑ **Tribal Missions:** T.O.R. missionaries maintain a deeply established presence in remote, tribal regions of Eastern India, such as Bihar and Jharkhand, often focusing on holistic community development.

❑ **Counseling & Outreach:** Facilities like the Free Mind Counselling Centre are dedicated to helping individuals in local communities face mental health challenges with confidence.

❑ **Pastoral & Village Ministries:** Alongside their primary religious duties, friars run parish churches and support surrounding rural villages, adapting to the diverse languages and cultures of the subcontinent.



Fr. Wilson and Fr. Thomas

We are Franciscans belonging to the *Third Order Regular* of St. Francis of Assisi. The friars belonging to this Order work all over the world in serving the people of God through their preaching, works of mercy and living in their own fraternities.



Fr. Wilson Lucka, T.O.R.

In 1930s the friars from Loretto, Pennsylvania, went to the remotest part of North India to evangelize an indigenous group called *Santals*. The friars through their hard work set up many missions for the evangelization of the native people through their mission schools and charitable works in the remotest parts of India. Later many local young men joined the Order from that part of the world to continue the mission started by the great missionaries from America.

Later this mission of evangelization was spread to the whole of India. Today we have three Provinces in India with over 300 friars working in the mission. The friars mainly operate mission homes which board poor children; homes for the elderly who are very poor; and various social programs such as bringing drinking water to the villages, making houses for the homeless and providing medical clinics for the needy, etc.

Besides their mission works, the friars spend a lot of resources for forming young men for Priesthood. We have 67 seminarians studying in our Seminaries in the country. Every contribution you make will be used for these works of the Mission in India through our legal entity in U.S.: "Third Order Regular of St. Francis Province of Saint Thomas Inc." It is a certified tax-exempt Corporation. May God bless your generosity.

Fr Thomas Poothara Chacko TOR
MISSION DIRECTOR

Fr Wilson Lucka TOR
U S/CANADA COORDINATOR

Conversion
Contemplation
Poverty
Minority





Houses For the poor



TOR

Mission Activities

Education of the
poor



Drinking Water
Facility



Retirement Home
For The Abandoned



Free Food &
Medical
Services



**TOR - St.
Louis
Province
India**





Fr. Ramonato Abril, Mission
Co-op visitor, July 2007.



Fr. Jude Sampath,
diocese of Galle,
Sri Lanka, 2023





A visitor: **Fr. Charles Collins**, former pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish and Our Lady of Good Health Tamil Parish.



Ayesha Sardar and Benny John.

GK Harrison and members of
the Holy Trinity Prayer Group.



CLERGY NIGHT, Precious Blood Parish;
Fr. Binyam Yacob (spiritual care of
Ethiopian Catholics), Fr. John Mark
Missio, pastor, Precious Blood; Fr.
Edwin Galea, pastor, St. Maria Goretti.

