

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 40 miles 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 Goretts on one side and the Serenellis on the other, and a kitchen in the middle.

Within two 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 His own father was increasingly gripped by alcohol, and Alessandro became more and more reclusive and withdrawn.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. In prison he was locked 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 laborer. 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 he 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.

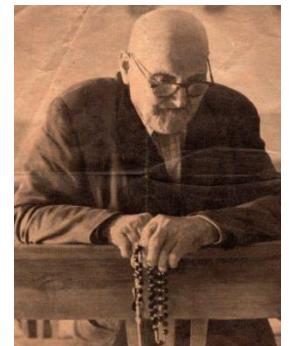
At the age of 20, I committed a crime of passion, the memory of which still horrifies me today. Maria Goretti, now a saint, was my good angel whom God placed in my path to save me. Her words both of rebuke and forgiveness are still imprinted in my heart. She prayed for me, interceding for her killer.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



Chiedo perdona al mondo per
 l'oltraggio fatto alla Martire Maria
 Goretti e alla purezza esorto tutti
 a tenersi lontani dagli spettacoli
 immorali, dai pericoli, dalle
 occasioni che possono portare
 al peccato.
Alessandro Serenelli

Parish Week / Sunday, 15 July 2018

Saturday, 14 July

- 8.00 am Mass: Int. Birthday Marjorie Joseph (Mom, Agnes)
- 5.00 pm Mass: † Mary & Phillip Fernando (Manuel)
- 6.00 pm Knights of Columbus meeting and Installation

SUNDAY, 15 JULY / 15-B

■ Homilist: Deacon Ramon Villardo

- 9.00 am Mass: Int. Alwina Fernando (friends)
- 10.30 am Mass: Int. Scotley Johnson Jr. (family)
- 12.00 pm Mass: † Eduardo Villanueva (Cristeta)
- 7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

Monday, 16 July / Our Lady of Mount Carmel

- 8.00 am Mass: † Charles D'Silva (Lydia & family)
- 10.30 am St. Maria Goretti Summer School Church visit
- 7.00 pm Mass: † Salome Carriaga (family)

Tuesday, 17 July

- 8.00 am Mass: Int. Thanksgiving Elsie Maranam

Wednesday, 18 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Orlando, Virginia & Arnel Tolentino (Augusto Tolentino & family)

Thursday, 19 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Aurelia Torres-Dres (Ed & Tita Villanueva)

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

- 8.00 am Mass: † Luigi DiCicco (Emma, Mom)
- 11.00 am ► Ina Grafton Nursing Home Mass
- 2.30 pm Wedding: Rohit Mane & Lara D'Souza
- 7.00 pm Mass in Honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Saturday, 21 July / St. Lawrence of Brindisi, priest & doctor

- 8.00 am Mass: Int. Fr. Elias Chachati (friend)
- 5.00 pm Mass: † John Finney (Melanius & family)

SUNDAY, 22 JULY / 16-B

■ Homilist: Fr. Edwin Galea

- 9.00 am Mass: † Crescenzo Tisi (Grande family)
- 10.30 am Mass: † Jamie Ulikas (family)
- 12.00 pm Mass: Int. Tessie & Anita Mendonca (friends)
- 7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

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.

SL ShareLife



THANK YOU VERY MUCH !

Thanks to all for your support of our parish 2018 *ShareLife* Appeal. As of 9 July, we have reached a total of \$37,206.00 for this year's Campaign ! This is a real blessing, a tribute to the generosity of every donor, at a time of great need.

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

Our Parish goal for 2018 is: \$50,000.00.

There are still late donations coming in; this year's Campaign officially closes at the end of July. We will publish the Grand Total for our 2017 Campaign in the first bulletin in August.

Mass Intentions Requests for 2019

The Mass Intention book for 2019 is now open. The parish office will accept requests for intentions after any Sunday Mass and during weekday office hours. See the *Mass* table in the Vestibule.

Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe Visit the Historical Centre of Mexico



15 – 21 November 2018

Under the spiritual direction of **Fr. Edwin Galea**.

Enrich your faith with memories that will remain in your heart.

See the PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE on page 3 in the bulletin or on our website.

\$2,199.00 Canadian per person; includes all taxes and tips.

For more info, contact: **Michael Kwadrans**, 647-887-4069.

There will be a MASS IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE at 7.00 pm on Friday, 20 July.

COMING UP

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| 27 July | Wedding: Bharwani – Paul (11:00 am) |
| 28 July | St. Anne's Feastday Mass (1.00 pm) |
| 29 July | 2 nd Collection: Maintenance |
| 5 Aug. | Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major ; - Fr. Elias Chachati , birthday (1955) |
| 6 Aug. | Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord ; - Infant Baptism Parent/Godparent Meeting (7:40 pm) |

Website stmariagoretti.archtoronto.org

See the *Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe*, and the *Prayer to the Holy Spirit*: page 3 in the website bulletin.



[Above: Urban symmetry in Paris, France.]

St. Maria Goretti School † Lunchtime Supervisor Needed

Monday – Friday, 11:15am-12:15 pm (Sept. 2018 – June 2019)

Required:

\$14 / hr. Voided cheque or direct deposit form Copy of SIN card or copy of work permit due to SIN beginning with 9 (if applicable) Proof of birth date with photo ID (i.e., driver's license, new health card, passport). One certified cheque or money order for \$65.00 payable to Toronto Police Services

All interested applicants please email:

denise.canning@tcdsb.org , or stephen.patel@tcdsb.org

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

We are here before you, O Holy Spirit, conscious of innumerable sins, but united in a special way in your holy Name. Come abide with us.

Penetrate our hearts, guide our actions, indicate the path we should take, and show us what we must do so that, with your help, our work may be in all things pleasing to you.

May you be our only inspiration and the overseer of our intentions, for you alone possess a glorious Name together with the Father and the Son.

May you, who are infinite justice, never permit that we be disturbers of justice.

Let not our ignorance induce us to evil, nor flattery sway us, nor moral and material interest corrupt us, but unite our hearts to you alone, and do it strongly so that, with the gift of your grace, we may be one in you and may in no way depart from the truth.

Thus, united in your Name, may we always follow the dictates of your mercy and justice, so that today and always our judgments may not be alien to you and in eternity we may obtain the unending reward of our actions. Amen.



[Photo above: **Desiree Fernandes** receives her Certificate for having completed an online course for Catechists, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Toronto in collaboration with the University of Dayton, Ohio.]

Prayer to our Lady of Guadalupe

O Virgin of Guadalupe,

Patroness of unborn children, we implore your intercession for every child. Help expectant parents to welcome from God the priceless gift of their child's life. Console parents who have lost that gift through abortion, and lead them to forgiveness and healing through the Divine Mercy of your Son. Teach us to cherish and to care for family and friends, until God calls them home.

Help us never to see others as burdens. Guide our public officials to defend each and every human life through just laws. Inspire us all to bring our faith into public life, to speak for those who have no voice. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who is Love and Mercy itself. Amen.

