

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 His own father was increasingly gripped by alcohol, and Alessandro became more and more reclusive and withdrawn.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

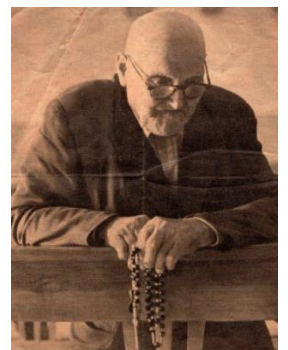
At the age of 20, I committed a crime of passion, the memory of which still horrifies me today. Maria Goretti, now a saint, was my good angel whom God placed in my path to save me. Her words both of rebuke and forgiveness are still imprinted in my heart. She prayed for me, interceding for her killer.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

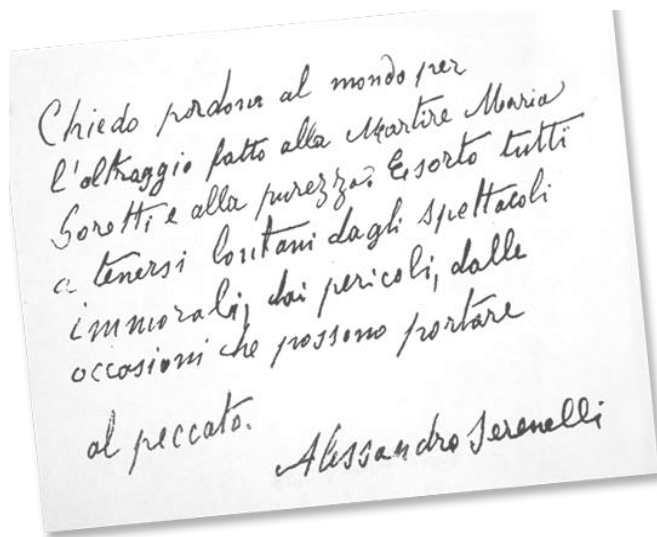
Resigned, I atoned for my sin. Little Maria was truly my light, my protector. With her help, I served those 27 years in prison well. When society accepted me back as a member, I tried to live honestly. With angelic charity, the sons of St. Francis, the minor Capuchins of the Marches, welcomed me among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





Parish Week

Sunday, 14 July 2019

Saturday, 13 July / St. Henry

- 8.00 am Mass: Int. Fr. Elias (friend)
 5.00 pm Mass: Int. Alvina Fernando (friends)
 6.30 pm *ShareLife* BINGO FUN NIGHT (School Ark)

SUNDAY, 14 JULY / 15 – C

■ Homilist: Fr. Elias Chachati

- 9.00 am Mass: † Swarna Amereskere (family)
 10.30 am Mass: Int. Marjorie Joseph (Mom Agnes)
 12.00 pm Mass: Int. Thanksgiving Birthday (Helen Serneo)
 7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

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

- 8.00 am Mass: † Amanda Abuan (family)
 7.00 pm Mass: † Norah & Anthony Teixeira (family)

Tuesday, 16 July / Our Lady of Mount Carmel

- 8.00 am Mass: † Charles D'Silva (Lydia & family)

Wednesday, 17 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Marie Rego on her 40th death anniversary (family)

Thursday, 18 July

- 8.00 am Mass: † Hans & Rose Kwa (Angela Tam)

Friday, 19 July

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

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

- 8.00 am Mass: † Luigi Deccico (Emma)
 5.00 pm Mass: † Gabriel & Francis Andreas (Maria Subramaniam)

SUNDAY, 21 JULY / 16 - C

■ Homilist: Deacon Ramon Villardo

- 9.00 am Mass: † Billy & Ludy Ombac (family)
 10.30 am Mass: † Ramon Castro de Guzman (family)
 12.00 pm Mass: † Joseph Sigmund Ocasion (family)
 7.00 pm Mass: Pro Populo

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.

ShareLife 2019

Living the Gospel by supporting the Deaf community



Imagine you're a Deaf child and your parents don't know sign language. Your parents could gesture in a rudimentary way, but how do you share your joys, fears and needs? SILENT VOICE, a *ShareLife* agency, teaches American Sign Language and Deaf culture to families so they can share a common language. "I'm so passionate about SILENT VOICE," says one grateful parent, "because their Family Communication Program rescues children from social isolation." Last year more than 700 Deaf people and their family members received help through SILENT VOICE.

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

Our Parish goal for 2019 is: \$43,900.00

Total Raised to Date is: \$28,632.00

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 2019 Campaign in the first bulletin in August.

Please donate, and help us reach our goal! Your generosity to *ShareLife* will help bring compassion and hope to others.

Bingo Fun Night 13 July, 6.30 pm, The Ark

Our **BINGO FUN NIGHT** will be held on Saturday, 13 July, at 6:30 pm in the Ark at St. Maria Goretti School, next door. The program will feature the *ShareLife* 50/50 Draw; and the **Silent Auction**.

We hope that all parishioners will come to support this fun event. It promises to be a time of enjoyment and fellowship, all to serve a great cause, and help us reach our goal. Our generosity to *ShareLife* will help bring compassion and hope to others.

COMING UP

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28 July

2nd Collection: *Maintenance*;

- Catholic Women's League (11:30 am)

- Knights of Columbus, *Meeting & Installation* (1:00 pm)

5 Aug.

Feast of the Dedication of the **Basilica of St. Mary Major**;

- Infant Baptism Parent/Godparent Meeting (7:40 pm);

- **Fr. Elias Chachati**, Anniversary of birth (1955)

6 Aug.

Feast of the **Transfiguration of Our Lord**;

15 Aug.

Feast of the **Assumption of Mary**

Website stmariagoretti.archtoronto.org

For more information on these and other parish activities, see pages 3 and 4 in the website bulletin.



(Photo above:) **Fr. Elias Chachati** stands alongside **Mater** and **Jose Reyes** as they celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on 9 July 2019, by attending morning Mass with the parish community at St. Maria Goretti Church.

Archdiocesan Parish Photo Dossier
Raven the photographer will be photographing our Church and property on 15 July for the Archdiocesan archival office.

Midland Pilgrimage 8 September
 Our parish **CWL** invites parishioners to take part in this year's Rosary Sunday celebration at the Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Midland, Ontario.

This year, the Rosary Sunday trip to Midland will be on 8 September. For more information, and to sign up for a seat on the bus that will be going up, please contact: **Mable**, 416- 890-5863 or **Eden**, 647-713-8773.

Unplanned – The Movie 12 July

From the producers of **God's Not Dead**, comes the captivating true story of a former Planned Parenthood worker in '**Unplanned.**' She is Abby Johnson, who was the youngest director of a clinic in the U.S.

In fact, she was awarded the 2008 Employee of the Year at Planned Parenthood. Altogether, she was involved in upwards of 22,000 abortions. But after she assisted on an abortion involving a 13-week-old fetus, her entire world changed.

Before that moment, Abby believed that an unborn baby could not feel the pain of an abortion. She soon realized that was not true. Abby walked out of the procedure and never looked back. "I can't be part of this anymore. Everything they told us is a lie."

After she left, Planned Parenthood tried to silence her and even took her to court. But ultimately, Abby made sure her voice was heard and let it be known what was actually happening behind closed doors.



Boats with participants of a CORPUS CHRISTI procession float on *Staffelsee Lake* near Seehausen, Germany. A Eucharistic procession on the water is a traditional feature of the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi.

Very early in the 14th century, the custom developed of carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a grand procession through cities after the Mass on Corpus Christi Day. This was encouraged by the Popes, some of whom granted special indulgences to all participants. The *Council of Trent* (1545-1563) solemnly approved and recommended the procession on Corpus Christi as a public profession of the Catholic faith in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Sacrament.

In time, these processions grew into splendid pageants of devotion and honor to the Blessed Sacrament. They are still publicly held, often with the ancient splendor, in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, in the Catholic sections of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Canada, Hungary, and in Slavic countries and South America. Heads of state, magistrates, members of trade and craft guilds, and honor guards of the armed forces accompany the procession while the Church bells peal, bands play sacred hymns, and the faithful kneel in front of their homes to adore the Eucharistic Lord.

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