

Then followed a tormented death struggle. On July 6, 1902, at 3:45 pm., she dies while kissing the Cross.

On April 27, 1947 Maria Goretti, virgin and martyr was beatified by Pope Pius XII. She was given the sign of honor: the lily and the palm leaf. Her mother Assunta was present and had an audience with the Pope. Alexander had been sentenced to thirty years in prison with hard labor. Back in his cell when he heard about her beatification he laughs: "if she is a saint, then let her rise from the dead." But the Lord's ways are mysterious. Maria appeared to Alexander in a dream and offered him a lily. While he accepted the flower, she changed into small flickering flames. This was the beginning of his redemption... When the Bishop visited him he learned that Maria had forgiven him. As he muttered "She has forgiven me?", he burst into a flood of tears... he went to confession and openly confessed to the crime. At Christmas in 1937 he made the most difficult step and travelled to visit Assunta and with tears... begged Maria's mother forgiveness. She simply said: "If Maria has forgiven you, why should I not forgive you?" On this Christmas Eve, Assunta was seen kneeling together at the altar rails with the murderer of her daughter. Alexander entered the Monastery of the Benedictine order and was given the task of gardener and was known as brother Stephano. The wish Maria Goretti made on her deathbed had been fulfilled. On June 24, 1950 Maria Goretti was canonized by Pope Pius XII, in the presence of her mother and Alexander her Murderer... The holiness of Maria is not that she chose death above sin, but of all that gave her the strength to brave martyrdom; the practice of virtues in the family circle, the spirit of prayer and penance and receiving of the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist...

Short prayer to Maria Goretti:

"Holy Maria Goretti watch over the youth of the world."

When God is in our hearts we can do great things. It does not matter our age, our strength, or our position. When we surrender completely to God he uses us in ways we would never dream or imagine. Sometimes like Joan of Arc we are sent into battles we are unprepared for— with weapons we use not by strength or prowess but simple faith. Maria Goretti was twelve years old when she was put to the test— she knew already in the depths of her being that God was her highest and only good. Nothing, she determined was going to remove her from god's sight. But this required the very sacrifice of her life.

Her story is a beautiful story— one that inspires and enriches all who read it.

*(excerpted from: www.marypages.com)



Saint Maria Goretti

Saint Maria Goretti

Feast Day: July 6



***"Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God."***

(Matthew 5:8)

Saint Maria Goretti

*Maria Goretti was born in Italy, near the city of Corinaldo, on October 16, 1890, christened on October 17, 1890 and devoted to the Immaculate Virgin Mary. She was one of six children of Luigi Goretti and Assunta Carlini. Driven by hunger the Goretti family moved to Fierriere di Conca near Nettuno, where they rented a farm in a swampy area infected with mosquitoes. The Gorettis shared the farm with a family named Serenelli who lived upstairs. The family consisted of a widower named John and his son Alexander. Alexander had received a pretty bad irreligious upbringing with no prayers and no sense of morality. On May 6, 1900 Maria's father died. He could see a calamity looming and on his deathbed he constantly implored his wife Assunta "Please go back to Coronado and leave this place." But even though the wife would have liked to leave she could not leave because she had contractual obligations on the farm.

Maria was a great support to her mother, she never complained about all the work she had to do and often said, "Jesus will provide for us." Maria was growing up and her longing to receive Jesus through Holy Communion continued to increase. "I long for Jesus" she said. However, she could neither read nor write, so how would she be able to learn the catechism? However, helped by the priest and a lady in the village she learned very quickly and after a few months was able to pass her exams. At last, on June 6, 1901, the blessed day arrived that she did receive her First Holy Communion and it happened to be on the feast of Corpus Christi. Maria was radiant and her features portrayed a great innocence, purity and piety. A wall of love for God surrounded her. She was a very pious child, but she was definitely not naïve. No more than the other farm girl Jeanne d' Arc.

Maria goes as often as possible to Holy Communion. However, a calamity is about to happen. The Serenellis use the same kitchen to prepare their meals and Alexander constantly pestered Maria with horrid, sinful demands. Maria instinctively abhors sin, evil and weakness. The virtue in which Maria especially shone was purity; she looked like a lily descended from heaven. She prayed: "Take me Jesus, I offer myself to you." Maria had grown into a fine girl; she looked fifteen rather than the twelve year old she was. Alexander tyrannized everyone in the household and handed out the work as he saw fit. Assunta, to keep the peace, put up with beatings from Alexander. However, Alexander is very nice to Maria and spoils her. However, the child is scared of him; she vaguely understands that his

behavior is dishonest, insincere and lacks purity. This big boy to who nobody stands up to is hurt in his pride by Maria's responses and he made it very clear what he wanted from her. Maria is distressed and shouted, "No, never, that is a sin! God forbids that and we would go to hell."

The next day, Friday July 5, 1902, Alexander commands everyone to go and thresh beans, but he asked Maria to mend his shirt. The child shivered, is it a trap? She did not dare to disobey Alexander and he followed her into the house. In the house Alexander grabbed her roughly by the wrist and shouted: "Don't stop me or I will kill you." Maria screamed for help and fought like a tigress. Alexander could not control himself any longer and stabbed her with a knife, time and time again. In all he stabbed her fourteen times, one missing her heart by mere millimeters. Maria collapsed in a sea of blood and called: "Mother, I'm dying, Mother!" This did not even upset the brute who just walked away. Still, a bit later he returned and to make sure Maria was dead he stabbed her again. He then went to his room and goes to sleep in his bed, like nothing happened.

After a while Maria managed to drag herself to the door and weakly called for help, saying how Alexander is trying to kill her. Shortly after that she lost consciousness. When they found Maria she was taken to the hospital and they operated on her for two hours. They did not give her any anaesthesia because they were afraid she might not survive that. She suffered terribly, but not a sound passed her lips... Alexander is arrested an hour after the crime... and police had to prevent a lynching by a crowd of outraged people. Assunta is not allowed to spend the night by Maria's bedside. During the night, the rector visited Maria and asked her if she wanted to join the Congregation of the Children of Mary. He put the medallion with a blue ribbon around her neck and blessed her. Maria kissed the picture of the Holy Virgin on the medallion and prayed in the words that Catharine Labouré was given by Our Lady: **"Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to Thee."**

On the morning of the next day, Sunday July 6, 1902, Maria received Holy Communion. She said **"I forgive my murderer out of my love for Jesus. Alexander will join me in heaven, as I have forgiven him and I pray that God will too. Soon I will meet Him face to face!"**...