



St. Maria Goretti

Maria Goretti was born in Corinaldo in Italy on 16th October, 1890.

She was the third of seven children and her parents owned a farm. However, times were hard and they had to give up their farm, move home and work for other farmers.

When Maria was 9, the family moved once more to Le Ferriere which is about 50 miles outside of Rome.

They shared a house with the Serenelli family - who had a son called Alessandro. Soon after moving in though, Maria's dad died from malaria. Her mother, brothers and sisters worked in the fields while Maria (as the eldest girl) stayed at home and looked after the baby, Teresa, and cooked, sewed and cleaned.

By the time Maria was 11, 20 year old Alessandro Serenelli – the son of the family they shared a house with, was very attracted to her. He approached Maria a number of times but she refused his advances. Then on 5th July 1902, Alessandro found her alone and wanted to have sex with her. Maria refused pushing him away. This time, Alessandro tried to force himself on her, but Maria fought him off saying **“No! It is a sin! God does not want it!”**

Alessandro was so enraged that he drew a knife and stabbed Maria fourteen times before he ran away.

Maria was found by her mum and Alessandro's father and they took her to hospital. She survived the night but died the next day from her wounds. Before she died, she said she forgave Alessandro.

He was captured and spent 27 years in prison. He worked as a labourer for a while then retired to a monastery where he worked as a gardener. During his life he repented and asked Maria's mother to forgive him. She said “If Maria can forgive you, then I cannot do less!”

On 24th June, 1950 she was canonised a saint.

When Maria Goretti was canonised, the crowd was so big it became the canonisation to be held outdoors at St. Peter's in Rome. Her mother and four remaining siblings were there. She is the youngest ever saint and is patron saint of girls, teenagers, purity and forgiveness. She is often depicted holding lilies - symbols of purity.

The house flag for Maria is PURPLE – the Church's colour symbolising forgiveness.

Prayer to St. Maria Goretti

*St. Maria Goretti,
Help me to be pure in heart;
Help me to be an example to others;
Help me to forgive those who hurt me;
That they might be transformed by God's healing love.
AMEN*