



# Faith Formation

## Saint Maria Goretti

**Trivia Question:** I am the youngest canonized saint in the Catholic Church. I died at the age of twelve in 1902. In my last words, I forgave my murderer. Who am I?

**Answer:** St Maria Goretti! Her feast day is July 6th.

St. Maria Goretti is unique in that she is the youngest canonized saint in the Church. She died tragically on July 6, 1902, at the age of twelve.

Born into poverty, her father moved the family when Maria was just six years old from the east side of Italy (near Ancona) to the west side (near Nettuno, about 40 miles south of Rome) in hopes of escaping the grinding poverty that was gripping the area.

Just three years later, when Maria was nine, her father died tragically. It fell to her at that time to raise her five siblings while her mother worked the fields to produce the crops with which they would both pay the rent and feed themselves.

This was a terrible time of trial and suffering for the whole family. For Maria it was especially difficult. Aside from having the responsibility of caring for her family, she had to also cook and clean for her two next door neighbors—Giovanni Serenelli and his son, Alessandro—who assisted her mother with the farm tasks.

It was also during this time that Alessandro began to develop an impure liking for Maria. The big 20-year-old would say rude and crude things to her, things that were inappropriate and embarrassing, and that would cause her to run away. However, at a certain point he began to make direct sexual advances towards her, demanding her virginity and threatening her with violence for non-compliance.

Finally, after many months of this, Alessandro forced himself upon Maria in an attempt to rape her. Though she prevented him from violating her, Alessandro brutally stabbed her numerous times. Maria died the next day in the midst of horrendous infection brought on by her lacerations. Her last words were, “I forgive Alessandro Serenelli ... and I want him with me in heaven forever.”

During his prison sentence Maria appeared to Alessandro and forgave him. That act of mercy and forgiveness—that act of love—filled Alessandro with contrition for his crime. It was also a turning point for him where grace entered his heart. From that point on, he lived a beautiful and converted life of holiness, eventually becoming a Franciscan lay brother.

Maria is known as a wonder-worker. She has intervened with the Lord to produce countless miracles. Of all the saints (over 160) whose relics Fr. Carlos Martins, Director of Treasures of the Church, ministers with, Maria is the one who by far has produced the most miracles.

[mariagoretti.com](http://mariagoretti.com) > [who-is-st-maria](#) Who is St. Maria? | Pilgrimage of Mercy

### Activity for Kids:

Maria Goretti is an excellent model and intercessor for today's youth, confronted by a sea of immorality poured out on the world by the modern media. She offers children and young people a refuge, protection, a serene spirit and the deep joy of the pure of heart. Maria Goretti, affectionately called Marietta by her family, was born in Corinaldo in 1890 on the Eastern side of Italy. Watch the story of this amazing story today!

[Story of Saint Maria Goretti](#) | Stories of Saints | Episode 77



0 Saint Maria Goretti you,  
strengthened by God's grace,  
did not hesitate,  
even at the age of twelve,  
to shed your blood  
and sacrifice life itself,  
to defend your virginal purity,  
look graciously on  
the unhappy human race  
which has strayed  
far from the path  
of eternal salvation.  
Teach us all and especially youth,  
with what courage and promptitude,  
we should flee, for the love of Jesus,  
anything that could offend Him  
or stain our souls with sin.  
Obtain for us from our Lord,  
victory in temptation,  
comfort in the sorrows of life  
and the grace  
which we earnestly beg of you  
..... (your intention)  
and may we one day,  
enjoy with you,  
the imperishable glory of Heaven.  
Amen

**Official Prayer  
for the intercession of  
St Maria Goretti**

Anastpaul/18

The story of Saint Maria Goretti is retold in this beautifully made film from Italy. It explains the plight of the poor laborers of the time, struggling to survive in a swampy area with rampant malaria and extreme poverty. Luigi and Assunta Goretti keep their faith despite the hardship, and they instill in their children a deep love for God. Their daughter Maria is especially devout. But tragedy strikes more than once: sickness and death affects the Goretti family, and then their young neighbor Alessandro does the unthinkable. This film is made on location and filled with authentic detail.

[Maria Goretti: The Story of the Patroness of Modern Youth](#)



**Activity for Kids:**  
[Catholic Resources-Saints Fun Facts- St Maria Goretti](#)

