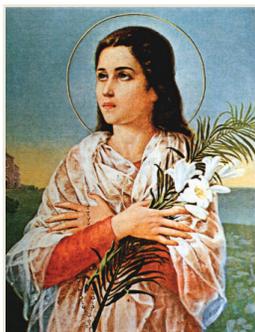


St. Maria Goretti



1890-1902

Feast Day:

July 6

Maria Goretti was born and lived in Italy. Her parents were so poor that they had to live in a house with another family and work on other people's farms. The family prayed together and loved each other deeply. Maria's father died when she was nine. Her mother took her father's place working on the farm, and Maria took her mother's place working in the home and caring for her youngest sister.

When Maria was 11, one of the sons of the other family, Alessandro tried to make her do something she knew was a sin, but she said no. She explained to him that what he was doing was a mortal sin, but he would not listen and attacked her, stabbing her multiple times. Maria was found by her mother and rushed to the hospital, but she was too deeply injured for the doctors to heal her.

As she was dying, Maria spoke with her mother. Maria said that she forgave Alessandro and wanted him to be in Heaven with her. Then she died. Alessandro was not sorry for what he did until Maria appeared to him in a dream while he was in prison for her murder. She gave him lilies that felt hot in his hands. The next morning Alessandro repented and confessed his sin. He spent almost 30 years in prison for his crime. When he was released from prison, he went immediately to Maria's mother and begged her forgiveness, and she forgave him. Alessandro lived at a Capuchin monastery for the rest of his life, praying often for Maria's intercession as his "protector."

Like Jesus, Maria was an innocent person who died for the sins of her attacker. She beautifully responded to Jesus' call to forgive. She was canonized forty-eight years after her death by Pope Pius XII. Her mother, some of her siblings, and Alessandro were there.