

St. Maria Goretti

(October 16, 1890 – July 6, 1902)



St. Maria was the third of seven children in a poor farming family. When she was nine years old, her father died, leaving her family even more destitute. To survive, their family moved in with another family. During the day, most of Maria's siblings along with their mother would work the fields, while Maria would watch her baby sister, manage the house, and cook meals. It was a hard life, but they were devoted Christians and were close to one another.

One day when Maria was just 11 years old, the 20-year-old son of the family whose house they were sharing, Alessandro, came home early from his work when he knew that she would be alone (except for the infant she was watching). He had asked her to have sex with him twice before and she had always refused. Wanting to rape her now, he brandished a knife and demanded that she submit to him. She refused, telling him that what he wanted to do was mortal sin, and warned him that he could go to hell for it. She fought him, screaming, "No! It is a sin! God does not want it!"

Furious, Alessandro first tried to choke her. When she continued to resist, he stabbed her 11 times. Injured badly but still alive, Maria tried to move toward the door. But he approached her again, stabbed her 3 more times, and then fled.

The baby woke up from the commotion and started crying. When Maria's mother and Alessandro's father came to check on the baby, they found Maria and rushed her to the hospital. She explained to her mother and the police what had happened, expressed forgiveness for Alessandro, and died soon after.

Alessandro was captured and sentenced to 30 years in prison. Though he was unrepentant for the first several years, he says that Maria visited him in a dream. Years later when he was released from prison, he apologized and sought forgiveness from Maria's mother, and received communion the next day. He said he would pray to Maria every day, calling her "his little saint." Amazingly, he attended Maria's canonization in 1950 and became a lay brother of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin.

(Source: churchpop.com)

More information at: www.santuarionettuno.it