

Alessandro Serenelli died on May 6th, 1970. He left the following testimony, dated May 5, 1961, as his spiritual legacy:

“I’m nearly 80 years old. I’m about to depart.

"Looking back at my past, I can see that in my early youth, I chose a bad path which led me to ruin myself.

“My behavior was influenced by print, mass-media and bad examples which are followed by the majority of young people without even thinking. And I did the same. I was not worried.

“There were a lot of generous and devoted people who surrounded me, but I paid no attention to them because a violent force blinded me and pushed me toward a wrong way of life.

“When I was 20 years old, I committed a crime of passion. Now that memory represents something horrible for me.

“Maria Goretti, now a Saint, was my good Angel, sent to me through Providence to guide and save me. I still have impressed upon my heart her words of rebuke and of pardon. She prayed for me, she interceded for her murderer. Thirty years of prison followed.

“If I had been of age, I would have spent all my life in prison. I accepted to be condemned because it was my own fault.

“Little Maria was really my light, my protectress; with her help, I behaved well during the 27 years of prison and tried to live honestly when I was again accepted among the members of society. The Brothers of St. Francis, Capuchins from Marche, welcomed me with angelic charity into their monastery as a brother, not as a servant. I’ve been living with their

community for 24 years, and now I am serenely waiting to witness the vision of God, to hug my loved ones again, and to be next to my Guardian Angel and her dear mother, Assunta.

“I hope this letter that I wrote can teach others the happy lesson of avoiding evil and of always following the right path, like little children. I feel that religion with its precepts is not something we can live without, but rather it is the real comfort, the real strength in life and the only safe way in every circumstance, even the most painful ones of life.”

Signature,
Alessandro Serenelli

Other Prison Ministry Materials Available

- Numerous books by author Stanley L. Jaki
- Back issues of *Inside the Vatican*, *The Sower*, *Gilbert Magazine*
- Assorted pamphlets
 - Confession
 - Confirmation
 - Basic Catholic Prayers
 - Spiritual Communion
- *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* by Pope St. John Paul II
- Books on the saints
- Books on spirituality
- Prayer cards
- And more!!!



Alessandro working as a Capuchin lay brother.

Tour of the Major Relics of St. Maria Goretti coming to the United States!



Photos courtesy Father Carlos Martins & MariaGoretti.com

According to a recent article in the National Catholic Register, the tour will be known officially as the “Pilgrimage of Mercy” and is the forerunner of the Year of Mercy Pope Francis has declared to begin on December 8.

The first public appearance will take place on September 21st at Sacred Heart Basilica in Newark, NJ. For a list of tour dates go to: <http://mariagoretti.com/tour-schedule-3/>

A plenary indulgence is granted during the Holy Year of Mercy for those who fulfill all of the usual requirements. Go to http://www.ewtn.com/expert/answers/indulgences_conditions.htm for more on the general guidelines to obtain an indulgence.

For the Least of These...

A Publication of Catholics United for Life for Those in Prison Ministry

FALL 2015

this issue



Letter from our President P. #1

Story of St. Maria Goretti P. #2

The Conversion of Alessandro Serenelli P. #3

Alessandro’s Spiritual Legacy P. #4

“...your ministry...is very demanding and very important since it expresses one of the works of mercy: to make the Lord’s presence visible in the prison, in the prison cell. You are a sign of the closeness of Christ to these brothers who are in need of hope.”

Address of Pope Francis to Participants in the National Meeting of Prison Chaplains, October 22, 2013

Dear Friends,

As we approach the Year of Mercy, we look to the child saint, St. Maria Goretti. She is the perfect ambassador of mercy, willing the good even for the man who had brutally murdered her. Her forgiveness and intercession for him extended beyond this life, into her heavenly life, as she appeared to him in his dreams to bring him mercy and forgiveness.

We, as a human race, are all so deeply in need of mercy today! Pope Emeritus Benedict describes our modern plight:

“A spiritual desert is spreading – an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair.”

The best way to overcome emptiness, fear or despair is to look outside of ourselves –

to The Christ – and to the needs of others. In prayer, we become the Universal Church, the Church Militant where there is no separation, no distance too far and no chasm too deep to keep us from being brothers and sisters.

St. Maria looked to the needs of Alessandro despite his terrible cruelty to her, and she prayed for his heart to heal. This year, spread the words of mercy, of Christ’s goodness and His great desire for all to find healing and hope!

Thank you for your service,
Tamara Cesare
President of CUL

Free Catholic resources for your prison ministry!

Contact: Theresa Smith at PO Box 10, New Hope, KY 40052

Or at smith.mtheresa@gmail.com/1-800-764-8444

St. Maria Goretti

Virgin and Martyr

CUL Prison Ministry

Our Prison Ministry Support Program is an effective way to distribute Catholic literature to inmates across the country. Having filled hundreds of requests from individual prisoners, only to have the materials frequently sent back to us for non-compliance reasons that varied from facility to facility, Catholics United for Life decided to partner directly with those already active in prison ministry. Our prison ministry associates receive up to four mailings a year free of charge! These mailings include pamphlets, booklets, prayer cards, books and occasionally Bibles and catechisms as well. CUL is happy to partner with prison ministers [or outreaches] to find a good use for materials that the printing industry calls "seconds." These are items which are not up to retail standards but are still very useful for individual faith formation. In addition, we try to fill specific requests from our associates as often as we are able.

WHAT WE CAN PROVIDE

- ✓ Three or more mailings of Catholic literature yearly, sent free of charge.
- ✓ English and Spanish literature.
- ✓ Response to special needs based on availability.
- ✓ Weekly Mass offered in our Mother of Sorrows Chapel for the intentions and needs of our prison affiliates and the inmates in their care.

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU

1. Complete the application.
2. Agree to the guidelines for the use of CUL materials.
3. Inform inmates that you are a CUL Prison Ministry Affiliate.



Santa Maria Goretti
<http://www.ourcatholiclife.com>
 Copyright 2015 by Lakeside Publishing * All Rights Reserved.

The daughter of humble sharecroppers, Maria and her family moved to the little town of Ferriere, Italy in 1899 in search of work. Desperately seeking to support his family, Luigi Goretti struck up a bargain with Signor Serenelli, who had a son named Alessandro. The two families lived together in a building owned by Count Mazzolini.

Maria quickly matured in grace and holiness in the eyes of friends and other acquaintances. After losing her father to malaria, she developed great strength and maturity. Her charming modesty, cheerful obedience and the serious, but free acceptance of a

hundred thankless home chores distinguished her from the other children who would play in the dusty streets of Ferriere. Perhaps the highlight of her life was her First Holy Communion, which she dutifully prepared for and awaited with great anticipation. She truly seemed to be advancing "in wisdom, and age and grace before God and men."

Lured by the passions of his day and nurturing the dark side of his soul with impious reading and thoughts, Alessandro Serenelli had been a thorn in lovely Maria's side. He propositioned her on several occasions and harassed her with impure suggestions. On July 5, 1902, he would be denied no longer.

As she once again rebuffed his sexual advance, shouting, "No! It is a sin! God does not want it!" Alessandro lunged to the deed, stabbing Maria 14 times.

Doctors in Nettuno tried to save Maria's

life to no avail. After 20 painful hours of suffering during which she forgave and prayed for Alessandro, Maria entered Heaven fortified with the Last Sacraments. Her last earthly gaze rested upon a picture of the Blessed Mother. It was July 6, 1902.

Almost fifty years later, on June 24, 1950, Pope Pius XII stood on the steps of St. Peter's in Rome and pronounced Maria Goretti a Saint and Martyr of the Universal Church to half a million people. He proposed her as the Patroness of Modern Youth and set July 6th as her feast day. Her mother and her murderer attended the canonization ceremony together.

This was the triumph of the little girl who loved God and hated sin.

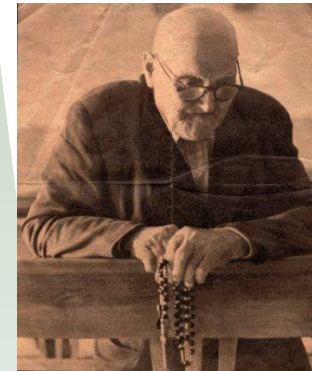
Articles courtesy of:
<http://www.mariagoretti.org/index.htm>

Photos of Alessandro Serenelli courtesy of
<http://mariagoretti.com>

Used with permission.

The Conversion of

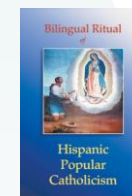
Alessandro Serenelli



Alessandro developed a good and holy prayer life even while still in prison.

Immediately after his brutal assault on young Maria Goretti, Alessandro was imprisoned temporarily in Nettuno and then transferred to Regina Coeli Prison in Rome to stand trial.

For Your Hispanic Ministry



Bilingual Ritual of Hispanic Popular Catholicism by Msgr. Patrick Brankin is an indispensable resource for priests, deacons and those in Hispanic ministry! Contains detailed instructions and diagrams (in English) with the prayers, texts and hymns (in Spanish). Makes ceremonies readily accessible to priests and deacons whose first language is English.

Get your free copy today while quantities last!

After vehemently denying his guilt, he finally broke down in the face of overwhelming testimony. Since he was a minor, he was sentenced to only thirty years' hard labor.

A priest came to see him soon afterward, and he turned on the cleric in rage, howling like a maniac and lunging at him.

In the days which followed, Alessandro lost his appetite and grew nervous. After six years of prison, he was near the brink of despair. Then one night, Maria appeared to him in his cell. She smiled at Alessandro and was surrounded by lilies, the flower symbolic of purity.

From that moment, peace invaded Alessandro's heart, and he began to live a constructive life.

After serving his sentence, Alessandro took up residence at a Capuchin monastery, working in the garden as a tertiary. He asked pardon of Maria's

mother and accompanied her to Christmas Mass in the parish church, where he spoke before the hushed congregation, acknowledging his sin and asking God's forgiveness and the pardon of the community.



Assunta Goretti (Maria's mother) and Alessandro Serenelli

Years later, on June 24, 1950, Maria was canonized at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, with Alessandro's heart now firmly converted to the Lord. A miraculous fruit of Maria's life, indeed!



The repentant Alessandro praying to St. Maria Goretti

Prayer of a Prisoner for CUL's Work

O Jesus, King of mercy, I adore You wherever You are made present in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and in Your Eucharistic presence in all the tabernacles of the world. Through Your suffering on the Cross, You called me to repentance, made me free, and gave me the dignity of being a child of God the Father. Shepherd of my soul, I believe in Your tender, loving kindness and want to be united in my whole being to Your Sacred Heart.

O Jesus, let the rays of Your mercy shine on all those who today are considering abortion, on those who provide abortion, and on all those who commit acts against the dignity of the unborn, the ill, the helpless, the poor and the elderly. I beg You to convert and change their hearts and minds. I pray for our nation, that its legislators and judges will enact laws to end the evil of abortion and euthanasia.

I pray for Catholics United for Life. I ask for Your blessings on their apostolate to defend life by promoting the saving truths of Holy Mother Church. May Your Blessed Mother intercede for their work to save the lives of the unborn, assist mothers by offering alternatives to abortion, and help those who have been involved in abortion to find Your mercy and healing.

I wish to offer reparation to You for all the sins that offend You and Your Blessed Mother. All who love You long to see all human life defended and respected. May our desires be according to Your will.

Amen.

For free copies of this prayer card, please contact:
 Theresa Smith at
smith.mtheresa@gmail.com or
 270-325-3061 and ask for item #0381.