



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Saints of Inspiration**  
***Part IX: Saint of Purity and Forgiveness***



*Saint Maria Goretti*  
Public Domain

**Introduction**

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Helen is a lay-Dominican with a love for music ministry. The Dominicans, I always mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon, in addition to being my lovely wife as well as a wonderful blessing in my life, is a youth and adult formation catechist. We are also blessed to have on our panel, Donna Mae, who is the artist who sculpted the statue of Our Lady of America which was carried by our youth and blessed by Saint John Paul II at the 1993 World Youth Day.

Of course, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because that is where I fell on the pay chart. I have no clue what that means, but we'll still throw that out there as an excuse. Anyway, the hard part we leave to our panelists, which is to answer my questions, correct my pronunciation, and make sure I know which century I am talking about, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

Dear Lord, we also lift up the prayers in our prayer basket. You know what is written on each one and you know the hearts of those who offer their thanks and praise as well as their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy.

We pray especially for those who have chosen to come into the Catholic Church and are now walking the journey of learning the fullness of our faith. We pray You will send the Holy Spirit to guide their hearts to understand what You ask of them and that You will enable them to help accomplish Your will. We pray they may also help to bring more hearts to You.

Let us also lift up the Flame of Love Prayer:

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
spread the effect of grace of thy Flame of Love over all of humanity,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

If you would like to add your prayers to our prayer basket, all you need to do is send us an email at [armoroffaithradio@gmail.com](mailto:armoroffaithradio@gmail.com). We ask that you include the word “prayer” in the subject line so that we will give it priority and ensure we place it in our prayer basket. Just so you know, Sharon and I lift up our prayers with those in the Armor of Faith Radio prayer basket during the course of our daily prayers.

We would also like to ask you to assist Armor of Faith Radio in our evangelization. By sharing the URL for our show, you can help us spread knowledge of our faith. All you need to do is share the URL, [wcatradio.com/armoroffaith](http://wcatradio.com/armoroffaith) via email or social media and tell family and friends as well. Several of the streaming services through which we are available on demand also have share options, so we invite you to join the evangelization and help us spread the good news of the Gospel and our trust in Jesus Christ. You can also help us by selecting the follow or subscribe option associated with the service through which you listen to our show.

### **Current Day Commentary:**

#### ***Fingerprints of God On Our Lives***

We need not look far in the world to observe the fingerprints of evil, but in what ways do we look for the fingerprints of God? Do we see His fingerprints in the stars? Do we see His fingerprints in the sun and moon? Do we see His fingerprints in the clouds? Do we see His fingerprints in the wonders and complexities of all which we call nature? Do we see His fingerprints on those He sends across our path and in those who share the reason for their hope? (cf. 1 Peter 3:15) Do we see His fingerprints on the opportunities He provides us to help accomplish His will?

Where, indeed, do we look for His fingerprints? How many times do we overlook them, though they are clearly upon so much of our lives? Most importantly, do we observe His fingerprints upon our hearts?

Perhaps in our haste to get through the day, we do not take time to look. Perhaps we have trouble looking beyond all the shiny objects of the world to see them. Perhaps we are so mired in personal troubles that we fail to observe them. Perhaps, we stumble across them from time to time, but we are just not aware enough to examine why they are there. Perhaps we take their presence for granted, but simply fail to take notice.

Blessed are those who observe His fingerprints and look to see what they mold. His creation, with all of its varieties, presents us with many horizons for study and discovery. It is through what God has molded by which we have so many opportunities to learn. It is through our learning by which we have so many ways to grow.

We make the analogy of life as a journey along a road or a path. From time to time, we will come to forks and turns. In those moments, we do not always know to where the path shall lead. Do we look for the direction to which God points? If we do not clearly see His fingerprints, do we ask the Holy Spirit to help us find them?

If we reflect on our lives carefully, we will see a number of moments where God nudged us. The question becomes, what did or will we do in response to that nudge? Did we ignore it, perhaps not recognizing from who the nudge came? Did we ignore it because we did not recognize the fingerprints of God, or did we pay attention because we did recognize the gentleness of His Hand?

My conversion to the Catholic faith was a long journey, which, by the way, continues as I endeavor to learn the fullness of our faith. Along the way, I did not always recognize the fingerprints of the One nudging me, but as I reflect back, I cannot mistake their presence. I now see so many moments, both good and bad, where He was nudging me and molding me. What patience He has.

One question we have before us each day is, will we recognize and examine to where God is guiding us? Will we choose to respond to His nudges? Will we discern and accept the opportunity He places before us? As we say, "Yes," another question will arise, what then will we do to assist the hearts of others to see as well? How will we help the world see the fingerprints of God? How will we help grow the number who will walk through the narrow gate?

## **Why Catholics Do What We Do:**

### ***Catholic Definitions – Part XXII: Amen Revisited***

Happy Easter!! Yes the season continues until Pentecost which is 50 days from Easter Sunday. Continue to enjoy this joyous season a little while longer.

I want to move in a new direction now. I think we need to talk about ways in which we, as Catholics, can affirm our faith. We need to be affirming to ourselves and others that we believe. Oh, we know we believe, but I think we need to hear ourselves say it in order for it to register within our souls, our minds and our hearts. We need to speak words that say, “I am a believer,” “I am Catholic,” “I am a Christian,” “I love Jesus.”

Today let us start with one very small word. Amen. We have talked about this word before, but it is so important that we will do it again today.

On a website called [studylight.org](http://studylight.org) I found a 1910 New Catholic Dictionary. Here is the definition they gave for Amen:

(Hebrew: aman, strengthen) A word in scriptural and liturgical use, meaning "so be it." It is used as an acclamation which indicates that the speaker adopts for his own what has been said by another (Deuteronomy 27), as an affirmation of the speaker's own thought, and as a formula of conclusion at the end of prayers. It was often spoken by Our Lord, and is given as one of His names (Revelation 3:14).

The word Amen comes to us from Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and English. It has been all over. This word has traveled great distances. It is one of only a few Hebrew words which has actually found its way into our Liturgies. Amen, having come from Hebrew, means “to strengthen” or “confirm.”

So when we say, “Amen,” we are saying that we confirm what is being taught or what was said. For example, when we finish a prayer, we always say, “Amen.” This means that after saying the Lord's Prayer, we are confirming that we agree with the words we have just spoken. Or, how about when we hear a person speak and we are stirred to respond with a loud Amen. We are simply agreeing with the thoughts of the speaker.

Amen has a connection to another Jewish word, “aman,” which means, to be confirmed, or upheld. And it is also connected to yet another word, “emet,” which means dependability and truth.

When we read various Scripture translations, we might see different ways the authors have used this word. Jesus was known to have used this word often in His ministry. He would say things like, “Amen, Amen I say to you.....” and continue with His thought. Because of the variety of ways in which this one word has been translated, we might see, “truly, truly” or “verily, verily” instead of Amen. In any case, it really does mean the same as truth, dependability, assurance, and certainty.

Amen was part of the Jewish culture and language centuries before Christ came. According to [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com), the New American Bible (Revised Edition) has 132 references to the use of this word. In Deuteronomy chapter 27 verses 15 to 26, Amen is used in every verse. In the Gospels, the authors; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; reference Jesus saying Amen a total of 76 times. During a Catholic Mass, we say Amen 20 times. Unless you say Amen at the end of the Lord's Prayer, which many Catholics do out of habit, and then it is 21 times during that one hour.

Amen is a most powerful word in our faith. We use it to express our faith and our belief. We should use this word wisely however, as we could say it at inappropriate times and then say to the world that we believe stuff that is totally wrong. We need to pay attention to what we say Amen and how we say it.

*Have a blessed week All. Remember, you are loved dearly by God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and yes, by us as well.*

If you would like to learn more about the Catholic meaning of the “Amen” we invite you to follow the links in the reference section of the topic summary for this episode. You can obtain the topic summary by visiting <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides/> and select episode 193.

### **Discussion:**

As we concluded our last discussion, I mentioned that because of his poor health, Saint Dominic Savio passed away at the young age of 14. I also pointed out that as we reflect on the life of young Dominic Savio, we are left to wonder, why does God take the good souls while they are so young? There may be many reasons for the answer, and we can only speculate, but, perhaps it is because God has a mission for them in heaven. As we lift up our hearts in prayer and listen, perhaps God will reveal to us His reasons as well as His mission for us.

Some may be tempted to see this child as, well, too well behaved and thoughtful; certainly not the challenge I presented as a child. Some may say he had no moral battle to overcome, and yet, he did. The world surrounded young Dominic with any number of trials and temptations, but he kept his focus on Jesus and what God asks of us. It was young Dominic's choice. With that focus, he was able to encourage others and live as an example, not only for the children of his age, but also for adults who encountered him as well.

Some may ponder that they made different choices as a child, and now it is too late to walk the path of young Dominic. Indeed, the evil one targets the innocence of children to lead them astray, which is why it is the responsibility of parents to guard that innocence with faith and love. Some like me may be tempted to say, but I have made so many bad choices, there is no hope that I may turn my life around.

This is the wonder of Jesus, that there is always hope through His Sacred Heart of Mercy. Saint Dominic Savio may have made the choice for God while a child, but it was still a choice. It is a choice we all may make today. No matter our past, we have a future with the Lord. No matter our past, we can decide to change what will come from us and perhaps endeavor to return to our childhood innocence as we seek to help accomplish the will of God, which a certain saint reminds us is love and mercy itself.

Today, our discussion turns to another young saint, who presents to us a devotion to purity as well as an example of the meaning and power of forgiveness. Maria was born to a family poor

in terms of the means of the world, but rich in terms of virtues and faith. In one account of her life, it was noted that Maria lost her father at the age of nine.

Maria often mourned the death of her father and took advantage of the least occasion to kneel before the cemetery gate; **her father was perhaps in Purgatory**, and since she did not have the means to have Masses said for the repose of his soul, **she tried hard to compensate with prayers**. (Marie)

**(Question 1:** While everything we do is a matter of our choice, Maria's behavior is partially a result of how she was raised by her parents. This story caught me because this is an example of a question I have asked before. **If we do not teach our children to pray for the souls in Purgatory, who will pray for us?**)

- What happens to faith if we do not pass it to our children?
- What happens to our children if we do not pass the fullness of faith to them?
- How can our children live the blessings of faith if they are not exposed to its fullness?
- Are we preparing our children to become saints or subjects of the world?
- Our children are a gift from God and our future
- Let us fulfill our responsibility and help our children prepare for their future
- Let us help prepare them for the conversation they will one day have with our Creator

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In another story about the young life of Maria, we are told of this exchange.

Maria yearned for the day when she would receive Holy Communion. According to the custom of the day, she had to wait until the age of eleven. “Mother,” she asked one day, “when will I make my First Communion?... **I want Jesus.**”—“**How can you make it? You don't know your catechism, you don't know how to read, we don't have the money to buy you the dress, the shoes, or the veil, and we don't have a free moment.**” — “Mother, **I will never make my First Communion this way! And I can't be without Jesus!**” — “But what do you want me to do? I can't let you go to receive Communion like a little ignorant girl.” Finally **Maria found the means to prepare herself, with the help of a person from the area. The entire village came to her assistance** to furnish her with the Communion garments. She received the Eucharist on May 29, 1902. (Marie)

**(Question 2:** In this example, we observe the strong desires of a young child. Of course, there are obstacles to the exercise of our faith, but **what do we observe here? What lesson does it provide as to our family and community responsibility for our youth?**)

- We provide the example for our children
- Helping hands are required to help our children learn and grow
- Parents have the prime responsibility for the raising of children, but the faith community and ministries can provide helping hands

- As the community helps children to grow in faith, the community also grows
  - What will we answer when Jesus asks us, “What did you do for these little ones I sent you?”
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In their poor estate, the family found themselves bound by a tenant farming contract which placed them in living conditions where they had a separate apartment, but shared a kitchen with Gianni Serenellis and his nineteen year old son, Alessandro, who was crude in his behaviors and interests. After the death of Maria's father, Maria's mother worked in the fields to provide for the family and work off the debt. Maria became a target of Alessandro's lusts. While Maria pleaded with her mother to not be left alone with Alessandro, Maria did not give her reasons, therefore, her mother did not comprehend the danger. On a day with her mother working, eleven year old Maria found herself facing the impure demands of Alessandro. Maria pushed away from Alessandro to defend her purity, which enraged Alessandro. As he endeavored to overpower Maria, he stabbed her multiple times.

The following is an account of her last hours:

After a long and painful ambulance ride they arrived at the hospital towards eight o'clock in the evening. The doctors were astonished that the child had not already succumbed from her wounds—the pericardium, the heart, the left lung, the diaphragm and the intestine had all been struck. Seeing that she could not be saved, they called the confessor. **Maria made her confession in complete lucidity.** The doctors then lavished their medical attentions on her for two hours, without putting her to sleep. **Maria did not complain. She did not stop praying and offering her sufferings to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Sorrows.** Her mother was admitted to her bedside. Maria found the strength to console her: “Mother, my dear mother, I am well now!... How are the little brothers and sisters doing?”

Maria was consumed with thirst—“Mother, give me a drop of water.” — “My poor Maria, the doctor won't allow it, it will make you worse.” Astonished, Maria continued, **“Is it possible that I can't have a drop of water!” She glanced at Jesus on the Cross, who had also said, *I thirst!*, and resigned herself.** The hospital confessor helped her in a fatherly manner. At the moment of giving her Holy Communion, he asked her, **“Maria, do you forgive your assassin with all your heart?”** She suppressed an instinctive repulsion, then replied, **“Yes, I forgive him for the love of Jesus... and I want him to come with me to Paradise... I want him at my side... May God forgive him, because I have already forgiven him...”** It was in these sentiments, those of Christ Himself on Calvary, that she received the Holy Eucharist and the Last Rites, serene, tranquil, humble in the **heroism of her victory.** The end was approaching. She was heard to call out, “Papa.” Finally, after a last appeal to Mary, she entered into the immense joy of Paradise. It was the 6th of July, 1902, **at three o'clock in the afternoon.**

**(Question 3: From a moment of evil, we observe the response of a saint. What do we observe here? What lessons might we take for the blessings of our own faith?)**

- The evil to which lust and selfishness may drive a soul
- The love which may be expressed, even for an assailant
- We may lift our burdens to Christ
- Our trials, tribulations, and afflictions may not be lifted from us in this world, but with the Mercy of Christ, they will be in the next
- The victor in faith will inherit the gifts of God. (cf Revelation 21:7)

(Isaiah 25:8-9)

8 He will destroy death forever. *The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces; The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.* 9 On that day it will be said: “Indeed, this is our God; *we looked to him, and he saved us!* This is the LORD to whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!”

(Revelation 21:4-8)

4 *He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.*” 5 The one who sat on the throne said, “*Behold, I make all things new.*” Then he said, “Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true.” 6 He said to me, “They are accomplished. I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. *To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water.*” 7 *The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son.* 8 *But as for cowards, the unfaithful, the depraved, murderers, the unchaste, sorcerers, idol-worshippers, and deceivers of every sort, their lot is in the burning pool of fire and sulfur, which is the second death.*”

When a saint passes from this world, their work is not over. We might suspect that God is likely to have more for them to do by which to encourage the conversion and salvation of souls. As the account continues, Dom Antoine Marie osb, writes:

A few years later, Bishop Blandini of the diocese where the prison was located, had the inspiration to visit the murderer to lead him to repent. “*You are wasting your time,* Your Excellency,” asserted the guard, “*he's a tough one!*” Alessandro, muttering to himself, received the bishop. *But remembering Maria, her heroic forgiveness, and the infinite kindness and mercy of God, he allowed himself to be touched by grace.* When the prelate left, he wept in the solitude of his dungeon, to the great astonishment of his guards.

*One night Maria appeared to him in a dream, dressed in white, in the flowery gardens of Paradise.* Overwhelmed, Alessandro wrote to Bishop Blandini: “I regret my crime so much more, aware that I have taken the life of a poor innocent girl who, up to the last moment, wanted to save her honor, sacrificing herself rather than give in to my criminal desire. I publicly beg pardon from God and from the poor family for this great crime committed. I want to hope that I too will obtain my pardon, like so many others on this earth.” His sincere repentance and his good conduct in prison earned him his release four years before the end of his sentence. He then found a position as a gardener in a

Capuchin convent and proved himself exemplary. He was admitted into the Third Order of St. Francis. (Marie)

**(Question 4:** Alessandro did not repent of his crime immediately. It was not until after the visit of the Bishop and the appearance of Maria in a dream that Alessandro was finally touched. Alessandro wrote to the Bishop, “I publicly beg pardon from God and from the poor family for this great crime committed.” Our first sense when we are injured is to seek revenge and retribution. What was the result of what Maria did and what lesson does this present to us?)

- Forgiveness opened the door to salvation for a sinner
- Forgiveness opened the door for a sinner to repent
- Forgiveness opened the door for a contrite sinner to come to Our Lord
- Forgiveness opened the door to salvation
- If an eleven year old understands the power of forgiveness, cannot we?
- Repentance means turning our direction – forgiveness enables that process

(Matthew 5:44-48)

*44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? 48 So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

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Forgiveness was not just an action of Maria. Dom Antoine Marie osb. writes:

At Christmas 1937, he [Alessandro] went to Corinaldo, where Assunta Goretti had retired with her children, solely to atone and ask forgiveness from the mother of his victim. Hardly was he before her than he begged, crying, “Assunta, will you forgive me?” — “Maria has forgiven you, how could I not forgive you, too?” stammered the mother. Christmas Day the residents of Corinaldo were not a little surprised and moved to see Alessandro and Assunta approach the Eucharistic Table side by side.

**(Question 5:** Perhaps this reveals to us that forgiveness is not always a matter of just one person, rather, there are ripple effects beyond one victim. When a life is lost, it creates a hole in relationships: the relationships of family, loved ones, and community. How was the door opened for the reconciliation of Alessandro and Assunta and what lessons might we learn from this example?)

- “Maria has forgiven you, how could I not forgive you, too?”
- Maria opened the door through her profession of forgiveness
- As an act of penance, Alessandro sought the forgiveness of Maria's mother
- Alessandro and Assunta brought their reconciliation before the Lord
- The effect of these decisions continues to ripple as an example to us all

**Thought:** As we observe these moments of time, the question comes to us, what example will we present within the flow of the generations?

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For a novena in honor of the Saint of Purity and Forgiveness, we recommend visiting [novenaprayer.com](https://novenaprayer.com/?s=Dominic+Savio) and search for Saint Maria Goretti. <https://novenaprayer.com/?s=Dominic+Savio>

Feastday: July 6

Patron: Youth, Young Women, Purity, Rape Victims

Death: July 6, 1902

Canonized by: Pope Pius XII on 24 Jun, 1950

### Quotes:

*Saint John Paul II on Saint Maria Goretti*

St. Maria Goretti and many adolescents, who in the course of the centuries have paid with their martyrdom for their loyalty to the Gospel, are beside [today's youth], to fill their souls with the strength of remaining constant and faithful. In this way, they can be sentinels of a radiant dawn, illuminated by hope.

Forgiveness, in the thought of the Church, does not mean moral relativism or permissiveness. On the contrary, it requires a full recognition of one's own fault and the assumption of one's own responsibility as a condition for finding true peace again.

Her tender age, her lack of education and the poverty of the environment in which she lived did not prevent grace from working its miracles in her. Indeed, it was precisely in these conditions that God's special love for the lowly appeared.

Our vocation to holiness, which is the vocation of all the baptized, is encouraged by the example of this young martyr. Look at her, especially you adolescents, you youth. Be, like her, capable of defending the purity of your hearts and bodies; make an effort to fight against evil and sin, sustaining your communion with the Lord by prayer, the daily practice of mortification, and the scrupulous observance of the Commandments.

### Final Thoughts:

In a message to the to the Bishop of Albano, in whose diocese rests the shrine of St. Maria Goretti, Saint John Paul II wrote:

We do not know whether it was the mother who taught forgiveness to the daughter, or whether it was the forgiveness offered by the martyr on her deathbed which determined the behavior of the mother. Nevertheless, it is certain that the spirit of forgiveness

animated the relationships of all the Goretti family, and for this reason could be so naturally expressed by both the martyr and her mother. (Saint John Paul II)

When we examine the lives of the saints, we are tempted to focus only upon the virtues of the saint, but we should also consider the ripple effects of the saint's example to generate virtue in others. Of course, that generates the question, to what virtues can the saints lead us?

As we observe the lives of the saints, we may observe the many ways we do not measure up. This should not be cause for our despair, rather, a cause for our hope. The example here begins with the virtue of Saint Maria Goretti and the example of her forgiveness, but it becomes more complete as we observe what rippled through Alessandro and Assunta. Should we find ourselves poor in virtue, as did Alessandro, we have the hope of repentance, we have the hope of penance, we have the hope of a contrite heart, we have the hope of reconciliation, and we have the hope of forgiveness. We have the hope that as we approach our Lord, that He will receive us and wipe away every tear.

There is so much more we could share about the Saint of Purity and Forgiveness, but again, we have so little time. If you would like to learn more about Saint Maria Goretti, we invite you to follow the links in the reference section of the topic summary for this show. You can obtain the topic summary by visiting <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides/> and look for episode 193.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has once more come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we turn our discussion to the Saint of the poor.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to share the blessings of our trust and faith in You. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path.

And let us share the Flame of Love Prayer:

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
spread the effect of grace of thy Flame of Love over all of humanity,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

**Next Session:** Saints of Inspiration – Part X: Saint of the Poor

**Current Day Commentary References:**

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