

“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

These are the words spoken by Jacob as he awoke from his dream of what we know as “Jacob’s Ladder,” where he saw *“a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!”*

And as such, the dream of Jacob can be seen as an allegory of angelic intercession and the generous outpouring of grace from the Most Holy Trinity.

Today is the Memorial of Saint Maria Goretti, a young Italian girl, who at the beginning of the twentieth century was murdered by a young man who tried to rape her. Maria fought off her assailant, who then stabbed her repeatedly. She died some days later, speaking of forgiveness.

Her attacker was sentenced to death, but because he was a minor, was allowed to serve 30 years in prison. After three years in prison, he was converted by a dream he had of St. Maria Goretti calling him to repentance.

Pope Paul VI, in speaking of St. Maria Goretti, said:

*The value of Christian virtue is so great,
so overwhelming,
so imperative,
that it is worth more than life.
Purity is not just a separate part of our being.
It belongs to our existence as a whole,
it is essential for our life.
Purity brings us in harmony of body and soul.*

Finally, tying in St. Maria Goretti’s namesake, that is, Our Lady with today’s readings — we can hear the words of Jacob echoed in the Church’s own *Litany of Loreto*, where Our Lady is called ‘House of God’ and ‘Gate of Heaven.’

Let us pray that through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, and St. Maria Goretti, that we may receive many graces to allow us to lead pure and chaste lives in the midst of the temptations of our permissive contemporary culture.

Our Lady, House of God and Gate of Heaven,
— Pray for us.
Saint Maria Goretti,
— Pray for us.