

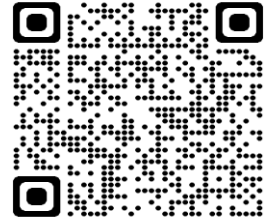


**St. Petersburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, Inc.  
Florida Council of Catholic Women**

**National Council of Catholic Women**

**St. Maria Goretti Education Scholarship Award**

**Catholic Senior High School Young Women's Essay Contest  
58<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, "We Walk by Faith, not by Sight (2  
Corinthians 5:7)"**



**MISSION STATEMENT**

*The St. Petersburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women acts through its members to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in Spirituality, Leadership and Service. SPDCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and Society in the modern world.*

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FOR THE ST. MARIA GORETTI SCHOLARSHIP**

Dear Applicant:

Please read the following Instruction Page before filling out and submitting your Application Form.

**Choose one of the three (3) topics below. Write an essay on your chosen topic.  
Essay must be 500—750 words.**

1. What does the Eucharist mean to me? How do I share this with the World today?
2. How do I put my fears aside and say yes, as the Blessed Mother said YES with my life?
3. Describe a time when your faith was challenged. How did your faith help you persevere and overcome that challenge?

The Award for the St. Petersburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (SPDCCW) Scholarship Essay is 1<sup>st</sup> Prize is \$1000.00; 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize and 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize are \$500.00 each. [The Essay Contest is open to actively practicing Catholic young women within the St. Petersburg Diocese who are currently in 12th grade and planning to enter college or vocational training.](#)

Essays must be sent to **Missy Garrett, Chairman of SPDCCW Essay Contest at: 27544 Pleasure Ride Loop, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544.** **Essay must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2026.** Winners will be notified by phone and by mail and invited to share their Essay at the 58th Annual St. Petersburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention Bishop's Dinner on Friday May 1, 2026, at 6:45 PM to be held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton (Brandon) 10220 Palm River Rd, Tampa, FL 33619. Each winner will receive three complimentary Dinner tickets (one for themselves and two guests). Additional Dinner tickets may be purchased for **\$to be determined** each.

Yours in Christ,

St. Maria Goretti Scholarship Committee

*Missy Woltman, Chairman* [mgarrett79@me.com](mailto:mgarrett79@me.com)

*Maureen Todero, Kathy Huey, MaryAnn Douglas, and  
Reverend Joel Kovanis, Spiritual Advisor*



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**APPLICATION FORM FOR ST. MARIA GORETTI SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

**(Please Print)**

1. **Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. **Mailing Address:**  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish now attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. **Parent or Legal Guardian(s):** \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. **Date of Birth:** Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. **High School currently attending:**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. **Youth Group you attend, if applicable:**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of your Youth Group Adult Leader: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. **Attachments Required:**  
Two Letters of recommendation from your Pastor, Associate Pastor, Spiritual Advisor, Faculty Member, or Youth Group Leader (Choose 2)  
Home Parish: \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. **Essay:**  
Attach a typed Essay of **500 to 750 words** answering the question you have chosen from the three (3) topics listed above.



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## Saint Maria Teresa Goretti

*Patroness of purity, young women, and victims of assault*

(Italian: [Ma'ri:aTe're:za Go'retti]; (October 16, 1890 – July 6, 1902) is an Italian virgin-martyr of the Catholic Church, and one of the youngest Saints to be canonized. She was born to a farming family. Her father died when she was nine, and the family had to share a house with another family, the Serenellis. Maria took over household duties while her mother, brothers and sister worked in the fields.

One afternoon, Alessandro, the Serenellis' 20-year-old son, made sexual advances to her. When she refused to submit to him, he stabbed her 14 times. She was taken to the hospital where she died forgiving him. He was arrested, convicted and jailed. During imprisonment, he repented. Perhaps one of the first miracles attributed to St. Maria Goretti is what speaks most of her character. Nearly six years after her violent murder by Alessandro Serenelli, she appeared to him in his jail cell. She had forgiven him as she lay dying in 1902 after he stabbed her to death for refusing his sexual advances.

After 27 years, he was released from prison and visited her mother to beg forgiveness, which she granted. He later became a lay brother in a monastery and died in 1970. She was beatified in 1947 and canonized in 1950. She is especially venerated in the Congregation of the Passion (Passionists).

Prayer: ‘O God, author of innocence and lover of chastity, who bestowed the grace of martyrdom on your handmaid, the Virgin Saint Maria Goretti, in her youth, grant, **we pray, through her intercession**, that, as you gave her a crown for her steadfastness, so we, too, may be firm in obeying your commandments.’ Amen

<b>Born</b>	October 16, 1890 Corinaldo, Province of Ancona, Marche, Kingdom of Italy
<b>Died</b>	July 6, 1902 (aged 11) Nettuno, Province of Rome, Lazio, Kingdom of Italy
<b>Venerated in</b>	Catholic Church
<b>Beatified</b>	April 27, 1947, Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City by Pope Pius XII
<b>Canonized</b>	June 24, 1950, Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City by Pope Pius XII
<b>Major shrine</b>	Nettuno, Province of Rome, Lazio, Italy
<b>Feast</b>	July 6 (General Roman Calendar & Passionist Calendar)
<b>Attributes</b>	lily; farmer's clothing; martyr's palm
<b>Patronage</b>	Victims of rape, crime victims, teenage girls, modern youth, Children of Mary