

St. Maria Goretti

Patron Saint of Young People

The statue of Maria Goretti is the work of Janey Westin, a sculptor living in Minneapolis, Minn. The statue depicts a poor, young peasant girl. Maria Goretti died at the age of 12 during an assault. She is a patron saint of youth and upheld as a model of purity.

“In portraying St. Maria Goretti,” said Westin, “I imaged her as a vision appearing to the man responsible for her death. She is walking toward him in a gesture of forgiveness, holding lilies, a symbol of innocence and purity.”

Westin sculpted the figure from a block of Colorado Yule Marble. The stone is white with light veining of gold and charcoal gray. The original block was 62 inches by 26 inches x 21 inches and weighed 3,360 pounds. Westin selected the block from a wall in the quarry, in reality a mine within an underground cavern, at Marble, Colo.

The sculpture was created using an air hammer and a grinder. With these tools, Westin took the block within an inch of depth of the final image. A tooth chisel was used to peel away the remaining layers. The finish work was complete with the use of finer chisels, a sanding grinder, and hand sanding with heavy grit sandpaper, drywall sanding screens and synthetic diamond pads.

“The result is a stone sculpture, not with a shine, but one with a velvety finish and a soft radiant glow,” said Westin. “The flow of the hair in the sculpture has a texture created using a tooth chisel.” The finished sculpture is 61 inches tall and sets on a base of Silverdale limestone.

Westin began her artistic career as a calligrapher while still a student at the University of Minnesota. She learned the basic of carving letters in



slate while attending an international calligraphy conference in 1985.

She presented her first collaborative work on a 6 foot 8 inch diameter stone mosaic in 1999. Her work can be seen at religious and educational institutions in Minnesota and elsewhere.

Past commissions include: University of St. Thomas at St. Paul; St. Mary of the Lake, White bear Lake; St. John Vianney seminary Chapel, and in Minneapolis at the Basilica of St. Mary, St. Mark's Cathedral, and St. Olaf Church.