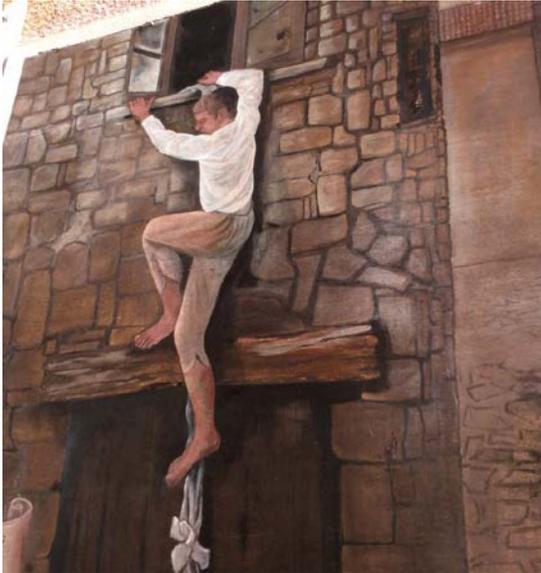


TRIDUUM IN PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF ST. GERARD MAJELLA



DAY TWO: OCTOBER 14, 2020

REDEMPTORIST CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION



The mural depicting Gerard's escape through the window, painted on the front of the family home in Muro Lucano, Italy.

GERARD MAJELLA: SAINT OF OPEN DOORS

They say that when God closes a door, God also opens a window. In the case of St. Gerard Majella, it was through a window that he left home to begin his life as a Redemptorist missionary. On the bed, his mother discovered a note, which read: "I am off to become a saint."

Though the moment was dramatic, even worthy of a movie, this was not the moment of conversion for the young Gerard; in fact, his entire life had been a slow, gradual, ongoing conversion to Jesus and—in particular—to Jesus in the Eucharist and to Jesus in the poor. Fr. Raymond Corriveau, CSsR, in his biography of St. Gerard, wrote, "he established himself as a tailor in his own right. His business prospered but he didn't make much money. He gave practically everything away. He would set aside what was needed for his mother and sisters and then give the rest to the poor or as Mass offerings for the souls in purgatory. There was no sudden startling conversion for Gerard. It was just a steady growth in the love of God."

Once he entered the Redemptorists, Gerard ever more fully became an open door, through which those around him encountered that love of God. Fr. Corriveau wrote, "It turned out the he was a connoisseur of souls, an advisor to priests, good at persuading people who were alienated from God, and concerned with vocations to the religious life. He gained a reputation for sanctity so that a number of persons came to him for guidance in the spiritual life."

Gerard served as porter at Deliceto and then at Materdomini, and when the poor knocked on the door, they found in him a listening ear, a loving presence, and food to warm the heart and feed the body. Through him, the love of God shone through.



Pope Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti*, urges us to be a Church of open doors (276). He says, "we want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation." (276) These words describe the life of St. Gerard. He opened doors. He welcomed visitors at the door. May we also be open doors.

WORDS ABOUT GERARD BY FR. CAIONE, A CONTEMPORARY

"In that harsh winter of famine (1755) in Caposele no one seemed to go away hungry who came to knock at door of the community, thanks to the efforts of Gerard."

MORE FROM FR. CAIONE:

"It was always Brother Gerard who often was found in the corridors of the Hospital of the Incurables, one with those poor sick ones... He always filled them with hope and left them all consoled."

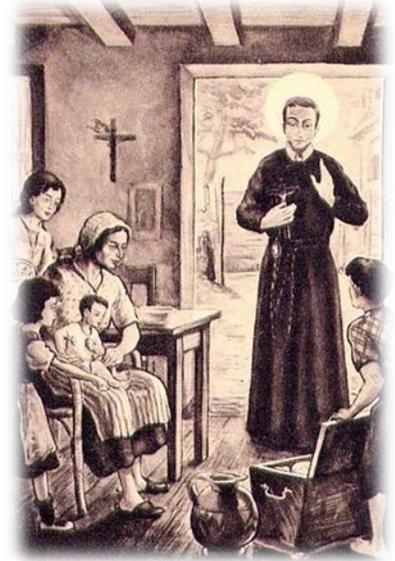
FOR YOUR REFLECTION...

- The heart of hospitality is generosity. How does a spirit of generosity open you to encounter others, and to let them encounter you, and, in you, Christ?
- Hospitality means opening doors. How have you been a door-opener?
- Hospitality means being open to new ideas and different ways of thinking and being. How have your encounters with other, particularly the wounded of our world, opened your mind and heart?
- Hospitality has both individual and communal dimensions. How are our communities becoming more open, inclusive, loving places of encounter?

THE WORDS OF GERARD

"Let us love our God, who alone merits to be loved: and how can we be able to live if from our hearts we do not love our beloved God?"

(Letter to Sr. Maria of Jesus)



Yesterday, we offered the traditional Novena Prayer prayed in the annual Novena in Honour of St. Gerard Majella in the Redemptorist church in Dundalk, Ireland. Today, we offer the prayer being prayed as part of the online Triduum in preparation for the Feast of St. Gerard by the Baltimore Province.

AND SO, WE PRAY OUR NOVENA PRAYER ...

Loving God, we rejoice to celebrate Gerard Majella, early saint of the Redemptorist Community, who loved to refer to You as the "thief of hearts."

With Gerard, we yearn to give our hearts to You ever more intensely, for You never cease pouring Yourself into our hearts.

Grateful for Gerard's companionship, may we, in his words, "re-create ourselves in the immensity" of Your Being, and serve more faithfully the poor and wounded, as he says, who are "the living images of Jesus Christ."

For it is in that Christ we lift our prayer to You, Source of all goodness, through the fire-light of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

