

THE LEAGUE OF Saint Gerard



PRAYERS • DEVOTIONS • MEMBERSHIP • GIFTS • RESOURCES • WINTER 2009

NEW YEAR, NEW ENDING, NEW HOPE

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR causes most of us to reflect on the past and hope for a brighter future. We put to rest the previous year's joys and sorrows, triumphs and disappointments, and successes and failures, and most of us have hope that the coming year will bring peace, joy, happiness, and love.

Yet for some of us, hope has been quenched by the floodwaters of tragedy. Something happened in the last year that makes any hope for joy, happiness, and peace seem like a faraway island.

It is in these moments, and we all have them, that we ask, "Where are God, the angels, and the saints in the midst of this tragedy? How could an all-loving God allow this to occur?"

These questions are all too familiar to priests and religious. We are called into the midst of some of the most devastating,

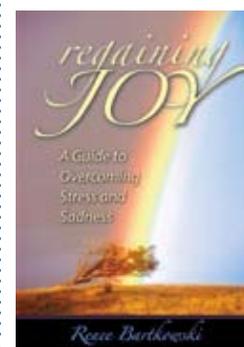
heart-rending experiences of people's lives, for example, the death of a child.

Where was Saint Gerard?

A priest was called to the hospital to bless a stillborn baby. The mother had gone to the doctor for a routine examination, and the doctor had discovered the baby's heart was not beating. By the time the priest arrived, the mother was sitting in bed, the father by her side, both crying as they stared in grief at the tiny body of their son lying in a blue plastic pan. The

mother asked the priest, "Why didn't Saint Gerard answer my prayers? Wasn't he supposed to help us?"

The first step in the healing process is to tell the story, so the priest asked what had happened. As the father talked, he blamed himself for his son's death. He believed this event was somehow a punishment from God for his own sinful past.



**Regaining Joy:
A Guide to
Overcoming
Stress and
Sadness**

**PAPERBACK
80 PAGES
ID 815805
\$7.95**

God lets us make choices so we may one day respond to God's call of love out of freedom.

After letting the couple state their feelings, the priest said, "Saint Gerard experienced suffering in his life. Do you think his suffering was a punishment from God?"

The father replied, "No, why would God punish a saint?"

The priest asked, "Then why did Gerard suffer?"

The father responded, "Because Jesus suffered."

Now the priest was ready to answer their question. "You asked why Saint Gerard didn't answer your prayers. Perhaps Saint Gerard *is* answering your prayers as he and Jesus cry with us here."

Saint Gerard suffers with us

Saint Gerard knew suffering, so he can enter into the moments of our suffering and bring us the healing we need. God never promised that suffering would not be part of our lives. Instead, God loves us so much that he respects every person's freedom, even our freedom to make mistakes and sin. God lets us make choices so we may one day respond to God's call of love out of freedom. Without freedom, we would be forced into a re-

lationship with God—a relationship based on fear, not love.

But that means we also can choose to move away from God. This is not God's will, but he permits it so we can maintain our freedom to return to God.

God calls us to him through bonds of love, not fear and punishment. And while horrific tragedies do occur, the actual reason for them remains a mystery. We don't know who or what is to blame. Any combination of factors can bring about suffering, and it may not be our fault at all.

God recognizes our feelings of helplessness in these situations. And while God didn't promise suffering would not occur, he did promise he'd be with us to the end of the age.

This is where Saint Gerard can help restore hope to the brokenhearted. After suffering occurs, if we turn to God for help, God always answers our plea. God will never abandon or forsake the brokenhearted. And since Saint Gerard is the patron of all mothers, he is present to a suffering mother and father who have lost their child.

Saint Gerard brings the hope offered by

Christ because Saint Gerard can help the family not to forget the event, but to remember it in a new way.

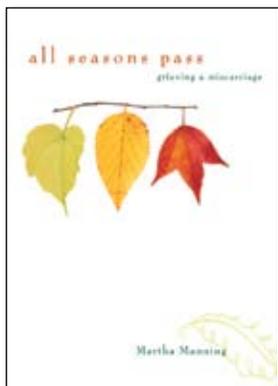
Gerard helps us write a new ending

Suffering was part of Gerard's story, but we don't characterize his suffering as pointless because we see it in light of the whole story, much as we see the suffering Jesus endured on the cross in light of his resurrection on Easter morning.

This new way of remembering an event makes the suffering part of a larger story, and Saint Gerard knows that story can end as one of hope, joy, and peace if we allow God to enter it. So while the suffering is real and the experience tragic, it doesn't have to be the end of the story.

Saint Gerard is present to assist the family in their time of need just as he will be present in *our* times of need by helping us write a new ending to the past year—an ending in which our suffering takes on new meaning.

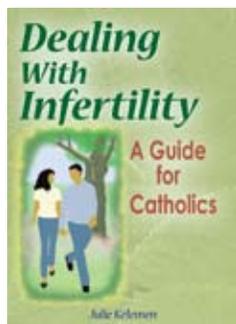
In the new year, Saint Gerard gives each of us a gift: he renews our hope so we can begin to remember our lives anew, live out of the hope and faith of the power of Christ's resurrection, and see that resurrection emerge in our own lives.



All Seasons Pass: Grieving a Miscarriage

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When a Pregnancy Ends in Miscarriage

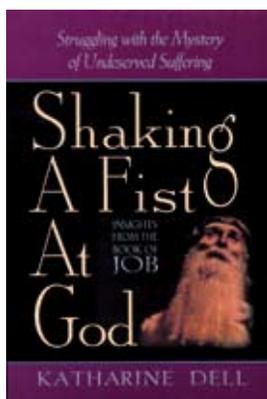
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Prayer

Saint Gerard, you were a man who knew great suffering, but you always maintained hope. You allowed God to enter into your sufferings as you entered Jesus' suffering on the cross. Through that suffering, the power of the resurrection was revealed to you, and you saw your suffering as part of the larger story of redemption.

Help us in our times of need. When we are in despair, bring us hope. When we are in pain, bring us relief. When we are in sorrow, help us regain joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Enrollment in the League of Saint Gerard

Each enrollment is \$10.00 and includes a certificate, an aluminum Saint Gerard medal, a wallet-size picture of Saint Gerard, a prayer leaflet, and the booklet *Gerard Majella: The Mothers' Saint*.

Enroll me in the League of Saint Gerard.
(English: G0101; Spanish: G0107)

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____
 E-MAIL _____

Check this box if you cannot afford the enrollment fee; you may still participate as a member. Saint Gerard has been good to us.

Please send enrollment gifts to the following people:
(English: G0101; Spanish: G0107)

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SIGNATURE ON GIFT CARD _____

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please remember the following intentions in the weekly Mass offered in honor of Saint Gerard:

MASSES

Please offer the following Mass(es) for my intention(s) as indicated.
(Masses cannot be offered on specific dates.)

The suggested stipend for a Mass is \$5.00.

I have enclosed \$ _____ for this purpose.

DONATIONS

In gratitude for favors received, I wish to make a donation to help spread devotion to Saint Gerard.

I have enclosed \$ _____ for this purpose.

The Heart of the Matter

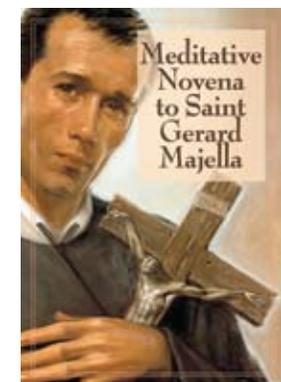
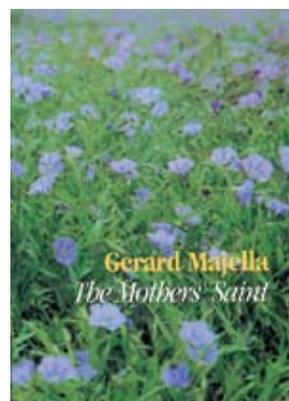
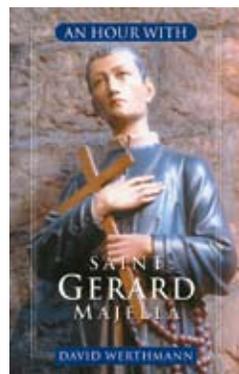
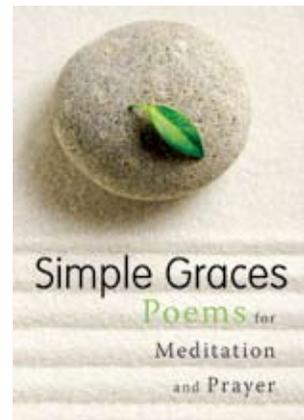


Send your prayer requests and letters to
 miss-spon@liguori.org
 or League of Saint Gerard,
 One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057-9999.

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Cut along the dotted line.