

Saint Gerard

Feast Day Issue • 2014

NEWSLETTER

Dear Friend of St. Gerard,

Today you and I celebrate the Feast Day of St. Gerard, special protector and intercessor for all mothers, as well as those desiring to be mothers, those having trouble conceiving, and those women with a difficult pregnancy or delivery. On his Feast Day, I encourage you to tell your family and friends about his Website and Facebook page dedicated to bringing hope to mothers and women who want to become mothers. St. Gerard is a wonderful example of someone placing his complete trust in God.

Would you like to include your mother in our Masses for his Feast Day? Please send me her name, as well as sisters, aunts, grandmas or anyone whom you have loved as a mother. I and my fellow Redemptorists will pray for them and place their names at the altar in our chapel at the provincial office.

Fr. Allan Weinert C.Ss.R.

In Christ the Redeemer,

Fr. Allan Weinert, C.Ss.R

Redemptorists of the Denver Province



About the League

Two questions come to mind immediately: Who is St. Gerard and what is a league? Gerard Majella (1726-1755) is today popularly known as “The Mothers’ Saint.” How did this come about? It does seem odd that a male religious should be the saint for mothers, mothers-to-be and those wanting to become mothers. The origin comes from an incident that happened in the last months of his short lifelived in at least two different places. Both were small, cramped houses, little more than a single room that served as kitchen, living room, bedroom and tailor’s shop. Dominic and Benedetta were simple, religious people who tried to do the best they could for their children, while never being far from the brink of poverty.

Mother of Jesus, his own mother, and all mothers he encountered. This is still true today as we see how many lives he continues to touch with God’s graces. On this Mother’s Day we ask the Mothers’ Saint to bless all mothers.

Once, as St. Gerard was leaving the home of his friends, the Pirofalo family, one of the daughters called after him because he had forgotten his handkerchief. In a moment of prophetic insight Gerard said: “Keep it. It will be useful to you some day.” The handkerchief was kept treasured as a precious souvenir of Gerard.

Years later the girl to whom he had given it was in danger of death during childbirth. She remembered the words



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League *continued*

of Gerard, and called for the handkerchief. Almost immediately the danger passed and she delivered a healthy child.

This wonderful story was the beginning of devotion to and belief in the miraculous powers of St. Gerard in favor of women who are soon to become mothers, who long to be mothers or who already are mothers.

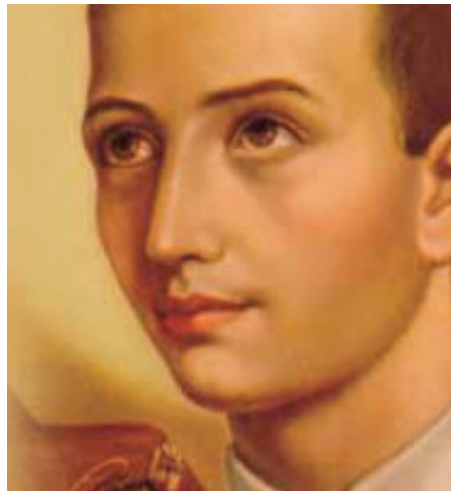
It was really not the Redemptorists who first promoted this devotion to St. Gerard. The popularity of this devotion is due, first of all, to all the Italian women and mothers who believed and promoted this confidence and trust in the intercession of St. Gerard. It was Italian mothers who spread this devotion throughout Italy and Italian immigrant women who took the devotion with them to many parts of the world, including the USA. The Redemptorists also have promoted devotion to St. Gerard throughout the world, beginning with the Shrine-Sanctuary of St. Gerard Majella in Materdomini, Italy, where he is buried. To this day mothers are the greatest supporters and promoters of devotion to St. Gerard, because they feel and know firsthand the power of his intercession.

What is a league? The word comes from the Latin *ligare*, which means to bind or connect. The word religion comes from the same root and means to reconnect, to bind together again, which is what all good religion is intended to do: to reunite or connect us to God and to one another, because we have a sinful tendency to get “disconnected.” A league then is an association or union of people formed and bound together or united in order to promote the interests of its members, or for some common action.

The League of Saint Gerard then is an association of dedicated people, under the patronage of St. Gerard, who wish, like him, to commit themselves to following Christ and doing God’s will. This association, now sponsored by the Redemptorist Missionaries of the Province of Denver, is designed to

promote devotion to St. Gerard Majella, the Mothers’ saint, and to create an ever-growing prayer community that prays constantly for:

The gift of motherhood; • for women having difficulty conceiving; • for pregnant women; • for women enduring a complicated pregnancy; • for safe deliveries; • for new, first-time mothers; • for women who adopt; • for mothers who struggle in poverty; • for mothers of children with special needs; • for pregnant women or mothers with HIV/AIDS and other compromising illnesses; • for mothers of the incarcerated or who are incarcerated themselves; • for mothers of soldiers; • for single mothers; • for foster mothers; • for birth mothers; • for teenage mothers; • for mothers



who have lost a daughter or son; • for grandmothers and great grandmothers; • for sick children; • for respect for all life from conception to natural death; • for women who have had an abortion; • and all other intentions that are sent.

The ideals and purposes of the League: To encourage the members to live with the mind, heart and spirit of Christ every day, making use of God’s help, always available through prayer and in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

To promote and participate in the prayer community, especially through the League of Saint Gerard eNewsletter, Website and Facebook page, praying especially for all the intentions expressed (mothers, mothers-to-be,

those longing to conceive, etc.)

To pray frequently for St. Gerard’s intercession, especially during pregnancy, but for all people in times of trouble.

To share confidence in St. Gerard with others, especially those urgently needing his assistance.

To help every human being grow in God’s love, remembering the final destiny of each person – the fullness of life with God for all eternity.

To seek knowledge of God’s holy and loving will with respect to the generation of human life, accepting the teachings of the Catholic Church as expressions of God’s will and love.

To unite with the Church in asking God to grant us all a profound love and respect for all life, not only for this generation but for the fulfillment of all human beings, regardless of race, ethnicity, beliefs, political affiliation or social standing.

To support the Church and all other groups or movements that promote human life and to seek ways to eliminate all immoral practices or procedures that terminate human life prematurely, unjustly or unnecessarily (war, murder, capital punishment, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, etc.)

Members receive:

A certificate & a medal of St. Gerard;

A wallet-size picture of St. Gerard;

A prayer card;

A Novena and Prayers to St. Gerard Majella booklet;

A subscription to the League of Saint Gerard electronic newsletter.

The graces of a Mass offered each week for all League members and their petitions.

Enrollment: You may enroll yourself or anyone else.

We suggest a free-will offering of \$10. However, if you cannot make this donation, you can still participate as a member of the League of Saint Gerard.

By Fr. Joe Dorcey, C.Ss.R.



What saint has quadrupled in popularity on Facebook this past year? What kinds of miracles are seen daily when his help in prayer is asked?

Social Media Spreads

The Mothers' Saint, St. Gerard Majella, was a Redemptorist missionary brother for just over three years, yet in that short time he was widely recognized for his holiness, and already considered a saint by many at the time of his passing. The roots of his holiness go back to his childhood. He did not become a saint overnight. And, as in the case of all saints, being holy is about what God does within a person and in the life of a person. God did and continues to do marvelous things in, through and around St. Gerard Majella.

The League of Saint Gerard was begun in North America in the early 1900s. Only more recently and with the help of new technologies – especially social media – this devotion is growing at miraculous rates. The community around St. Gerard's Facebook page has grown from 5,000 to 20,000 in the last year, and every post inspires many Likes, Comments and Shares.

New enrollments in the League of St. Gerard are added weekly. Hundreds of medals, prayer cards and devotional booklets have been distributed.

Traffic at St. Gerard's website continues to grow, as more people come to light candles, share their testimonials, and request devotional materials.

It is exciting to see the online prayer community that is growing around this saintly Redemptorist brother. This community prays for a constant stream of petitions that arrive every day for St. Gerard and his friends.

These prayers are being heard and answered; they are having a powerful and positive effect, as evidenced by the many testimonials submitted.

Couples finding it difficult to conceive, suffering with one form or another of infertility, are able to overcome these problems and are granted the gift of parenthood.

Difficult pregnancies become less difficult.

Deliveries are safe and childbirth goes smoothly.

Sick children get well.

Couples with troubles in their marriages seek and find solutions.

Many are given hope, and that hope is not disappointed. We seek and see miracles, because we believe that miracles still happen today, especially through the intercession of our miracle-working St. Gerard and the prayers of his community of friends.

Some say that there is no need to speak to or go through St. Gerard. One may speak directly to God, the Father, Jesus, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. And this is true. The founder of the Redemptorists, St. Alphonsus Liguori, encouraged people to speak familiarly with God, with confidence and simplicity.

We may, and always should, speak directly with the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. However, this does not exclude the possibility of also speaking with the saints, with those already alive and living in perfect communion with God, and asking them to pray with us and intercede for us.



Social Media *continued*

Do we not sometimes, or even often, ask someone here on earth to pray for us? Why should we not ask a sister or brother like St. Gerard, already in heaven, to also pray and intercede for us? This makes perfect sense and is hardly displeasing to God who is always ready and anxious to receive all our prayers, no matter how they arrive, whether directly or through one of God's saints.

Undoubtedly friendship among all the saints, both those in heaven and we still on earth, is absolutely beautiful and precious in the eyes of God. Catholic popular piety has always had a place, and will continue to have a place in our spiritual tradition, taking nothing away from our primary love and devotion to the Most Blessed Trinity.

However, not all our prayers are answered as we wish or when we wish, but the bottom line for all prayers of petition is: **THY WILL BE DONE**. In the end, it is God's loving plan and holy will, wise and good, that must be done, for only God knows what is truly best, even when we cannot see the why, how, when or where of it.

We can never promise or guarantee anyone that our prayers will be answered as we hope. We can only humbly, confidently and sincerely pray for others and their intentions. God always hears us and sometimes even grants what we request. But whether we receive what we ask for or not, we remain forever grateful to God for all good things, for there is no existence without divine blessing.

And where is all this leading us? Well, hopefully, closer to God, where St. Gerard already is. May our devotion and commitment to St. Gerard, through new technology and social media, continue to spread and deepen faith, confidence and hope in, commitment to and love for our loving God.

Testimonials

Almost every day we get messages from people giving witness to St. Gerard Majella's powerful intercession: overcoming infertility, receiving the gift of motherhood, getting through a difficult pregnancy, a safe delivery, a healthy baby, a relationship restored, healing and health recovered, to name a few. We want to share a sample of these messages here because they inspire three things we all desperately need: faith, hope and love.

TYN GAYOSO

Hi everyone. I am just writing to say thank you for the prayers, which helped so much during my delivery. I experienced a great miracle when, after being diagnosed with preeclampsia during my second trimester, I had a placental abruption which placed both the baby and me at risk. God is good all the time. He protected me and my baby. I successfully delivered my baby boy on July 18, 2014 through a Stat C-section. Thank you so much for praying for our safe delivery. God bless. Please see the picture of my baby boy. Thank you so much. You can post my message to inspire and enrich the faith of the friends of Saint Gerard. You can also use my baby boy's picture, his name is Chredd Sebastian Jamolo. I would like you to know how much my husband and I appreciate your helpful prayers.



ANGELYN AND ROBERT

My husband and I are pleased to announce that we are expecting our first child after seven years of trying! We are having a baby girl and she is due around Thanksgiving! We prayed to St. Gerard and St. Padre Pio and never lost faith! Indeed our baby is a miracle and testimony from God. Don't stop believing and keep praying!

NANA

I prayed to St. Gerard Majella during my third pregnancy because the doctor claimed I had a breech baby. I was so worried that I might need to deliver the baby through surgery. The doctor even gave a timeline, that if on the 37th week the baby's position was still breech, I would need to prepare for surgery (caesarian). The 37-week USG showed the baby still in a breech position. I asked the doctor for more time. The 37.5-week USG showed that my baby's head had already reached the right position, ready for normal delivery. I had a safe delivery of my baby girl a week later. I gave my baby the name Gerardina. Praise God through intercession of St. Gerard Majella.

ELIZABETH

My husband and I decided to try for our second child when our first son was a year old. Within two months we conceived, but at six weeks we lost our baby. Six months later we conceived again. This time the pregnancy went to twelve weeks before we miscarried again. Not long after we started trying again but failed every single month. After

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Testimonials *continued*

two years of trying we decided to go for tests. My tests came back positive. Unfortunately my husband's were not. Our doctor gave us the sad news that my husband's sperm count was too low for us to conceive naturally. That day we walked out of the doctor's office determined to do all we could to have a baby. We prayed for God to bless us with just one more child to complete our family. We changed our diets and our lifestyle. Within three months we were expecting. St. Gerard's prayer for expectant mothers was recited every single day of my pregnancy. On the day I went into labor, unbeknownst to me I was also suffering from placental abruption, a serious condition that usually involves delivery by C-section, and could mean losing both mother and baby if not dealt with in time. However, my baby was delivered naturally after just an hour of labor and no complications whatsoever. He thrived from the day he was born and is now six years old. We went on to conceive two more babies after that and with each pregnancy St. Gerard's prayer has always been at the tip of my lips. Both deliveries were short and complication free, so much so that labor with my last baby was only 10 minutes long.

CONCEPCION BRACAMONTE

I am living proof of St. Gerard's miracle to conceive. I was able to give birth after three miscarriages. The doctor had told me that I was not going to be able to have any more children but I grabbed onto St. Gerard and now I have Gerardo who was born weighing 3.5 pounds, but healthy. I still pray to him every night and thank him for my son who is now 38 years old. Keep praying.

IRISH AND MICHAEL

I just want to thank St. Gerard Majella for continuously guiding my husband and me. I had my last examination, a hysteroqram, and my obstetrician told me that my previously blocked fallopian tube was already open and unblocked. Our chances to conceive are now higher than before. We hope that St. Gerard will continuously help us and pray for us, that God will guide us all throughout our journey in family life. I do believe that very soon God will bless us with a baby.

NICHOLA LYDON

My daughter was not planned. She is the best gift I have ever been given from God. Her name is Giovanna, which means a gift from God or a gracious gift from God in Hebrew. Children are a true blessing and if it wasn't for St. Gerard I'm not sure I would have made it through my pregnancy with my sanity. Thank you God, Jesus, St. Gerard and the Blessed Mother.

ANITA BOWMAN

I named my oldest son after St. Gerard. I had prayed to him all during my pregnancy and was having troubles. But St. Gerard came through for me, and my son was born ok, with nothing wrong. The doctors had predicted that he might not be born without problems, but with prayers to St. Gerard and our Mother of Perpetual Help he was perfect when he was born.

VICKY VILLARRUZ AND FAMILY

Dear St Gerard, I am writing to thank you for your intercession for me and my son, Miguel Joseph. My friend Victoria has asked for prayers for my son Miguel Joseph who has been in and out of the hospital because of being born premature. Please give my thanks to all who have prayed for us. My son's checkup results yesterday were good. We are hoping that as he grows up he will outgrow more of his present health issues. From my family, thank you all for your comfort and prayers for us. St. Gerard, pray for us always. Amen.

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Prayer to St. Gerard

Dear St. Gerard,
we ask for
a special blessing
on all women who
desire to become mothers.

We ask that
the genuine love
between women and men
might be fertile ground

for new life.

May their love

for each other

be made flesh

in a unique,

unrepeatable new person.

Amen.





Testimonials *continued*

BETH THOMPSON-GONZALES

When I was 14 weeks pregnant, I wrote to you about a tear in my placenta. I had been bleeding and was just devastated at the prospect of possibly losing my son. I made a promise that day to St. Gerard that if he would bless me and intercede for me, my son would bear his name. Today, in an hour and a half I am checking into the hospital and am being induced with a full-term, healthy baby boy – Joby Gerard! I just ask that you all pray for a safe delivery and a good labor! I have my St. Gerard handkerchief ready to hold during labor. Thank you St. Gerard for getting me this far. I know you'll be there the rest of the way for me!!

Praise Jesus and thanks be to St. Gerard for his intercession! I gave birth yesterday, June 24th to my son, Joby Gerard! He is healthy, and beautiful! I held my St. Gerard hankie during labor, and although it was very painful, it was very quick and effortless in the

final stages! I have had a semi-difficult pregnancy with tons of anxiety, and worry. I can't believe he's finally here and everything is perfect! Thank you to this community for their support and prayers! God bless you all! Thank you Jesus and St. Gerard... thank you... thank you!

URSULA McGUIGAN CAHILL

I prayed to Saint Gerard while pregnant with my two children and have given them both his name, Peter Gerard and Halle Majella. I always pray to Saint Gerard for my children and have had great faith in him for the last twenty years. I will continue to pray with great faith. Pray for us. Amen.

MYRA FRANCIS CHALLMAN

I miscarried my second baby at two months. I was devastated. But I kept my faith, believing that God would finish what He had started in my life! Eight months later, I am pregnant again and I'm on my sixth month

now!!! God is awesome!!! He knows our pains and tears and as long as we believe in HIS plans, He will make our hearts happy again.

PHIL CHIODI

Thank you, St. Gerard, for interceding for my wife and son during her difficult pregnancy. Although he spent some time in the NICU, our little guy is now a happy, healthy 19-month old bundle of joy! Thank you almighty, all-loving God!!!

MARY McGUIGAN

Thank you all for the prayers for Baby Riley. His heart operation went so much better than expected. The doctors said it was nothing short of a miracle. I know St. Gerard's intercession played a big part.