

Saint Gerard

Lent Issue • 2015 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friend of St. Gerard,

Lent is a season of forty days in which you and I, with the whole Church, prepare to celebrate the Paschal or Easter Mystery, the dying and rising of Christ, his passage from the cruel and humiliating death of crucifixion to the full joy of eternal life. It is the passage from darkness to light, from sin to grace and the victory of love over hatred, of life over death.

This mystery was at the center of St. Gerard's life, spirituality and ministry. It is the same mystery of Love that made him work wonders. As the Mothers' Saint, he is the special protector and intercessor for all mothers, those desiring to be mothers, those having trouble conceiving, and those women with a difficult pregnancy or facing a complicated delivery.

Please encourage others to [join the League of St. Gerard](#), share this newsletter with family and friends and tell them about his [Website](#) and [Facebook](#) page dedicated to praying for and bringing hope to mothers and women who want to become mothers.

In Christ the Redeemer,

Fr. Allan Weinert, C.Ss.R

Redemptorists of the Denver Province



St. Gerard Smiles Upon a Faith-filled Mother

By Brother John Matthys, C.Ss.R.

Dad loaded some of the children in the back of the station wagon. The third seat was all the way down so it resembled a playpen for the twins. Dad used the exterior hand crank to roll the back window down about a third of the way. The next thing he knew, Don had climbed through the rear window. He fell, landing headfirst onto the pavement...

My name is Br. John Matthys, and I am a Redemptorist missionary. I had the good fortune, along with the rest of my siblings, to grow up in a very faith-filled family and home. We would attend Sunday Mass together. We went to Mass as often as we could

during the seasons of Advent and Lent. My parents attended daily Mass. Each Tuesday we went to the Mother of Perpetual Help novena at St. Alphonsus Redemptorist Church.

We would pray the rosary together every evening after dinner and if the telephone rang, we were to inform the caller that "so and so" was busy right then, because we were saying the rosary. Some of us found this a little embarrassing! At the end of the rosary, Mother would always recite the prayer to St. Gerard, in thanksgiving for all her children.

There was a framed picture of St. Gerard on the second floor of our home, just down the wall from the



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St. Gerard Smiles *continued*

Sacred Heart of Jesus, right alongside the framed icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. We prayed during severe thunderstorms and Mother would always light a blessed candle. Whenever we were leaving the house, Mother and Dad would embrace us and trace the sign of the cross on our foreheads as they said: "God bless you!"

Mom and Dad named all their children after a favorite saint to whom they had a great devotion. By the time I was born in 1948, God had already blessed my parents with six children: Bernard Joseph, Gerard Anthony, Rose Marie, a set of twins, Diane Marie and Donald Michael, Robert Joseph, and then me, John Edward.

My mother was a full-time housewife and mother. My father, to support his growing family, worked many long hours pumping gas at a Texaco station and servicing both cars and bicycles. Their life was not easy, especially living in a small house. It was all bearable because they were faith-filled people and accepted children lovingly, as gifts from God.

My dad did most of the grocery shopping. He would gather two or three of the older children and bring them along, so as to give my mother a little respite. At this time Dad bought his very first station wagon – a four-door, nine passenger Plymouth, blue and white in honor of our Blessed Mother.

On one such occasion he brought the twins, Diane and Don with him to the supermarket. It was a particularly hot summer day, before cars had air-conditioning or seat belts, let alone car seats for children. Dad loaded some of the children in the back of the station wagon. The third seat was all the way down so it resembled a playpen for the twins. Dad used the exterior hand crank to roll the back window down about a third of the way. This provided the needed airflow through the car as Dad drove to the store.

He was driving to the local A&P when he noticed Don standing up by

the rear window inside the car. The next thing he knew, Don had climbed through the rear window. He fell, landing headfirst onto the pavement.

Dad slammed on the brakes and ran back to his baby boy who was bleeding profusely from the head. Don was transported to Mercy Hospital in critical condition and the doctors decided to send him to Children's University Hospital, some fifty miles away. My parents followed the ambulance for the next seventy-five minutes.

The prognosis was not good. The doctors convinced my parents that they should return home because they had six other little ones that needed them. While my parents were keeping vigil at the hospital, my mom's



sister, Marie, had come to our home to babysit. Mother and Dad finally returned home, tearful and prayerful, but full of faith and hope.

My mother recalled this story many, many times in her life. She never embellished on the events that took place so many years earlier. To be quite honest, my mother could not or would not lie or stretch the truth when it came to talking about God, our Blessed Mother or the saints. She would have regarded this as sacrilegious – and to offend God was just not acceptable.

This particular evening, after praying the rosary, Mom, as usual, prayed by heart the prayer to St. Gerard. It was all the more imperative to implore the "Mothers' Saint" for this special intention. My parents, especially Mom, had the greatest confidence in St. Gerard's

miraculous powers and his ability to intercede before Almighty God on her behalf. She didn't doubt for a minute that Saint Gerard would hear her prayer. My parents, family and friends stormed heaven with prayers on my brother's behalf.

Don had been hospitalized for almost a week. Toward the end of the first week, after praying the rosary, Mom began to recite the memorized prayer to St. Gerard, as she had done every evening, asking this special saint to please intercede for us. As she finished the prayer, she felt her right shoulder being slightly pressed downward and looking to her right, she saw St. Gerard standing there with his left hand on her right shoulder. He just smiled and said nothing.

This lasted maybe two seconds and my dad noticed my mom looking up. Dad was worried, but all Mother could say was: "Didn't you see him, didn't you see St. Gerard? He was just here. He was just now standing here between the two of us with his hand on my shoulder! St. Gerard just smiled at me."

My father became all the more worried about my mother's well-being until, at that very moment, the telephone rang. With the rosary finished, Dad answered the telephone. It was a doctor calling to say that Don had come out of the coma and they believed he would make a full and complete recovery.

My mother and dad never gave up. They taught us never to underestimate the power of prayer. Miracles do happen! God uses his special friends in heaven as go-betweens. God often uses other human beings to help us appreciate the unconditional love that God has for all of us. God used St. Gerard Majella to help my parents through a most difficult time in their life. This was not the last time they would call upon their heavenly friend to intercede for them.

St. Gerard is truly a wonder-worker. It should not surprise anyone today that mothers are the greatest supporters of devotion to Saint Gerard.



Making intercession for someone is central to our Christian faith and our devotion to the saints, and in particular, to Saint Gerard Majella.

The Power of Intercession is Love

By Fr. Joseph Dorcsey, C.Ss.R.

How often has someone asked you to pray for them or for some special intention? About 90% of the communication on the Web site and Facebook page of St. Gerard Majella The Mothers' Saint, are prayer requests. Hundreds of people ask St. Gerard and the Friends of St. Gerard to intercede for them in prayer: to overcome infertility, to conceive, to have an uncomplicated pregnancy, to have a safe delivery, to have a healthy baby, for sick children and for so many other intentions.

Intercessory prayer is powerful, precisely because it is an act of love. Love is the greatest power in the universe. It is real power, the power to transform, change and convert, to cure and heal, welcome and support. This love is faith and hope in action. We intercede in prayer because we believe, we hope and we love.

Making intercession for someone is central to our Christian faith and our devotion to the saints, and in particular, to Saint Gerard Majella. The word comes from the Latin word *intercedere*, which is a combination of two Latin root words *inter*, meaning "between," and *cedere*, meaning "to go."

Acting as a go-between is exactly what you do when you intercede. Maybe you are a peacemaker, play matchmaker, or just bring people together to work out their problems. People often ask others, especially the various saints, to intercede for them in prayer. They ask God to intervene in their lives so as to bring about a change that improves a situation.

Many people, even some Catholics, say that you do not need the saints. They say that you do not need to go through the saints to get to God, that you can go directly to God. They are absolutely correct, but only half right. It is true that you can and should develop a personal relationship with each of the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity: with the Father (Abba), with the Son (Jesus) and with the Holy Spirit (Ruah). This is very important and vital for any and all Christian life and spirituality.

However, it is also true that you are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). The saints are the holy ones of God, already fully redeemed in Christ, in full communion with God, fully present with and to God. Among these is our own St. Gerard Majella, always ready to intercede for us whenever we turn to him.

This is not a question of either this or that; it is both this and that. We can both pray to God directly and ask for the intercession of our friends, the saints. There is no competition or contradiction in doing both. In fact, they are quite compatible and complementary. Truth, in its fullness, is generally more "both-and" than "either-or." "Either-or" thinking tends to create separation and divisions that are nearly always irreconcilable and lead to unnecessary conflicts that do not lend themselves to easy resolution.

St. Gerard Majella is a powerful intercessor, especially for all things related to mothers and motherhood. Time has tested our devotion, and St. Gerard has not been found wanting. He does work miracles. Not always, but often enough to make us believe that he is a powerful intercessor who is close to God. The Friends of St. Gerard are a powerful intercessory force as well. In this community there are currently more than 32,000 Prayer Angels who follow St. Gerard's Facebook page,



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Social Media *continued*

thousands of members of the League of St. Gerard, and many other devotees around the world. God listens to all the prayer requests and responds to them with infinite wisdom, according to His loving plan and holy will, which can only be and will always be what is for the best.

The Catholic Catechism (nos. 2634-2635) also speaks to us and teaches us something about this important form of prayer:

“Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all people, especially sinners. He is ‘able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.’ The Holy Spirit ‘... intercedes for us... and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.’

Since Abraham, intercession, asking on behalf of another, has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God’s mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ’s, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks ‘not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others,’ even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.”

To intercede in prayer for others is to pray as Jesus did and still does. He intercedes constantly and for all time with the Father in favor of all people, especially those most alienated from God by sin. The Holy Spirit also intercedes for us, God’s holy people, according to the loving plan and holy will of God.

To intercede, then, is a godly, godlike activity and therefore a loving act, an act of divine charity. When we intercede for others, even for people we’ve never met and do not know personally, and even for people who have done us harm or wish harm upon us, we are acting like God. We are doing what Jesus and the Holy Spirit are doing together with those made holy through God’s creative and redemptive action in the world, that is, with the communion of saints.

In the Testimonials section of this Newsletter, you will find different examples of people who have been helped and blessed through and are grateful for the intercession of St. Gerard and his Friends. This is just a sampling; there are thousands more. Their testimony surely confirms all that was said above.

Please send this newsletter to members of your family and other friends, so they too can learn about St. Gerard Majella and the power of his intercessory prayer. All readers of St. Gerard’s Newsletter are invited to be active members of St. Gerard’s online prayer community by joining the League of St. Gerard, frequenting his Web site and liking his Facebook page. Be a part of this prayer community by taking to heart all the prayer requests received and spending some moments each day to intercede in prayer for those who seek God’s favor, a special grace, a blessing, healing or even a miracle.

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.

Yvonne and Mike Pledger:

Praying Past Still Birth, Miscarriage to New Life! I just wanted to thank you for all your prayers and to update you about my situation. I finally got a positive pregnancy test this morning! All the prayers worked! Thank you so very much! Please continue to pray for me that I have a healthy pregnancy. Thank you!



Rasha and Zane: Our Healthy Baby Boy

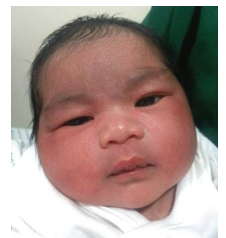
Hi, I am Rasha. I asked you guys to pray for us last Jan-

uary and now I can send a picture of my healthy baby boy, Simen Gerard. He was born this past June 11th. He is a true blessing. Thanks for all the prayers and support I got from all of the people out there who rained heaven with prayers. Thanks everyone, sorry it took so long to let you know, but I have my hands full now.

Mira Recto-Sastado:

Prayers for Safe Delivery Answered:

A few months back, I wrote a prayer request for a safe delivery of a healthy baby boy. I even requested to post it anonymously. Many posted their comments and advice and I know that many prayed for me and my baby, though, they didn’t know me personally. Now, I am writing again. This time around, I don’t mind posting my name. Actually, I would like people to know who I am and I am even attaching a photo of my



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Testimonials *continued*

baby to encourage everyone, especially, those couples who are having difficulty conceiving, not to lose hope and to continue praying. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and thanksgiving to Saint Gerard Majella for interceding and praying for me and my baby. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the people, friends, and prayer angels of Saint Gerard who have prayed for us. Just a quick flashback, it took us three years to finally be able to conceive. When I finally got pregnant, my baby was diagnosed as high risk for having Down syndrome. But God has really been good to us. This past October 17, 2014, I gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Thank you Saint Gerard! Thank you to all the people who have included me and my baby in their prayers. And most especially, I thank our Lord God for this miracle of life.

Serneth and Enrique:

Our Daughter Shares Her Birthday with St. Gerard: I just want to say thank you for all your prayers. I had a normal delivery this past October 16, 2014, which is also the celebration of the feast day of Saint Gerard Majella. My husband and I have been so blessed because of this gift. We are so thankful for so many gifts, especially our daughter. Thank you Saint Gerard, and especially to our Lord Jesus Christ. You may post the picture of my baby girl as a thanksgiving. Thank you so much for the prayers.



Maria and Paul: Safe Delivery via C-section

Thank you so much for all your prayers. Baby Joseph Paul arrived on Sunday, October 19th, at 3:15 pm by C-section. We are so blessed and overwhelmed. Thank you. I will continue to pray to St. Gerard every day.



Jess & Jack: A New Pregnancy

A million thanks for your prayers. I am already pregnant. And I'm now in my fourth month. It's truly a blessing from above. My husband and I were both happy for this little angel. Truly, God has amazing powers. He transforms all frustrations into blessings. I do believe in miracles now. God's will prevails in God's time. Thank you so much for the one who made this page. You are an instrument of God. Thank you for helping me/us in our quest for motherhood. Thank you for the prayers that made our dreams come true. Thanks to you, dear Saint Gerard Majella. For now, I want to ask again for your prayers for my healthy and safe delivery. And also for a healthy and wonderful baby that will add joy to our lives. Thank you so much and may God bless you a hundredfold.

Anonymous: Healing from Miscarriage

Two years ago today I had a D&C due to the miscarriage of my second child. I felt broken. It was after my operation when I got home that night that I realized it was St. Gerard's feast day. It gave me great comfort and made me realize that I was in his care and he got me through that day. I will never forget it. A miscarriage is a scar that will never heal, but I am blessed to have two very precious children now, and for them I will be eternally grateful. Thank you St. Gerard for being with us through good and bad, happy and sad.

Anonymous: Pregnancy Is a Blessing

St. Gerard and this group have been a great help and inspire me a lot to have more faith in God and St. Gerard. What a wonderful blessing to be pregnant and to have a baby by the end of January.

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Prayer to St. Gerard

St. Gerard,
please intercede
for all women
longing to be mothers
but finding it
difficult
to conceive.
Obtain for them
their heart's desire.
Help them
to be life-giving,
loving people,
always trusting in God
to make all
good things
happen at
just the right time.
Amen.





Testimonials *continued*

Linda Valentine

Safe Birth through St. Gerard's Intercession: I just discovered this beautiful saint on Facebook. Through his intercession, my friend's baby has been born safely. Thank you.

Anonymous:

Conceived after Nine Years: Dear St. Gerard, today on your feast I want to thank you for blessing my husband and me. Through your powerful intercession I have finally conceived after nine years and being told we would have to adopt. I am almost two months now!! This has been such an amazing gift from God. My husband and I are eternally thankful. Please continue to pray for us so that I may have a healthy little baby and a healthy pregnancy. Thanks again so much for all your prayers. We have truly been blessed!!!

Cristina Ofarel Verutiao

A Positive Pregnancy Test: Dear Saint Gerard, I am so happy to say that through your merciful prayers we got our positive pregnancy test, after a year of trying to have a baby! We are grateful for all your prayers and I want to praise God for giving us this blessing that we have eagerly awaited. I am still asking that you please pray for us, that we will always be healthy and may our baby continue to develop in Jesus' holy name. Thank you very much and God bless you all.

Nkiru Uzoh

A Difficult Pregnancy Smoothed by St. Gerard: I had a most difficult period while pregnant with my last baby. Each new day brought a different set of health challenges. I was frightened to say the least. My darling mother introduced me to St. Gerard and I immediately started a novena to him. St. Gerard was amazing. My delivery was smoother than I ever thought possible and our bouncing baby boy was born. He is an adorable and beautiful baby. Thank you St. Gerard. Thank you so much. I love you.

Patricia Umeh

New League of St. Gerard Enrollee: I wish to express my gratitude for enrolling me in the League of St. Gerard Majella, for sending me a membership certificate, medal, prayer book, prayer card and the ideals and principles of the League. May God bless and reward you abundantly. Thanks and Shalom. I believe that God has answered my prayers. Amen. EMMA – The Conception of Our First Child Dear St. Gerard, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your intercession, which has resulted in the conception of our first child. I pray that you please help me to have a safe pregnancy and delivery. Thank you so much.

Emma

The Conception of Our First Child: Dear St. Gerard, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your interces-

sion, which has resulted in the conception of our first child. I pray that you please help me to have a safe pregnancy and delivery. Thank you so much.

Barbara and Louis Seiter

Pregnancy after a Partial Hysterectomy: Prior to our marriage, Barbara advised that she had had one of her ovaries and Fallopian tubes removed due to endometriosis and that they were on opposite sides. We visited Fr. Armshaw, C.Ss.R. and appraised him of Barbara's situation. He advised us that this was not an impediment to marriage. He spoke with Barbara's surgeon, a Catholic, for more clarification. Fr. Armshaw then introduced us to St. Gerard Majella and suggested that we pray to him each night, which we did after our marriage. Six months later Barbara was pregnant! She delivered a wonderful, healthy baby girl. In addition, we were blessed with two more daughters! Thank you Jesus and St. Gerard.

Paula Timpson:

Adoption of a Beautiful Baby Boy: I encouraged my friend, who couldn't have children, to pray to St. Gerard and she adopted a beautiful baby boy and is so complete now! We prayed to him for a healthy baby boy and now we have a special son who is almost eight years old! Whenever I pray to St. Gerard I feel great peace, love and gratitude. God knows best what we all truly need..