



Saint Gerard

Feast Day Issue • 2016

NEWSLETTER

The Spirituality of St. Gerard

Br. Dan Korn, CSsR, recounts his pilgrimage to St. Gerard's shrine in Materdomini.

I remember when I was on pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Gerard in Materdomini, Italy. There were crowds of people gathering around his shrine, lighting votive candles and leaving written notes addressed to him. This simple familiarity with this saint touched me greatly. It felt like he was still alive walking among all the people. It was clear that to me this gathering of people around his shrine was like a Sunday gathering at the home of a favorite grandparent or beloved aunt or uncle.

By Brother Dan Korn, C.Ss.R.

As I was sitting watching all the people, I was struck with a father carrying his little daughter up to the statue of St. Gerard and holding her so she could touch the hand of the statue. I asked the Redemptorist who was



with me what the little girl was saying as she touched the statue of St. Gerard. He told me she said: "Thank you San Gerardo, for making me better!"

Saint Gerard is known as "The Mothers' Saint." He is known world-

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Dear Friend of St. Gerard,

I wish a very a happy Feast Day to all the members of the League of Saint Gerard, to all the Prayer Angel Friends of St. Gerard on Facebook and to all those devoted to promoting devotion to St. Gerard Majella as the Mothers' Saint! May today's celebration be a special moment of grace and blessing for all.

In this issue Redemptorist Brother Dan Korn, best known for his work on behalf of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, speaks to us about St. Gerard's spirituality. In addition, Father Joe Dorcey shares some thoughts to ponder regarding God's miraculous power, and the important difference praying with faith can make.

Please share this newsletter with family and friends. Tell everyone about [St. Gerard's website](#) and [Facebook](#) page dedicated to praying for and bringing hope to all mothers.

In solidarity with St. Gerard and all mothers,
Fr. Allan Weinert, C.Ss.R
Redemptorists of the Denver Province



Spirituality *continued*

wide as the great friend of Mothers who have difficulties in conceiving children and a miracle worker for children who are sick and suffering from medical issues, especially those considered to be incurable.

There is another segment of the fame of this great saint that is not often spoken about. It is the wealth of his spirituality. His relationship with God wherein lies the secret of his holiness.

St. Gerard's spiritual life is at the center of his miraculous reputation and the source of his powerful intercession in our regard. We get a hint of the foundation of his spiritual life in the opening prayer of the Mass in his honor.

"O God, you willed to draw Saint Gerard to yourself from his earliest years and to mold him to the image your crucified Son."

This "drawing" of St. Gerard to God can be translated as an inclination towards the things of God. It was a great sensitivity in St. Gerard. It became a driving force in him for the rest of his life. It is a teaching to us on how to develop a process in ourselves for seeking the things of God.

We often miss the point of why certain individuals are made saints. It is not just for us who have devotion towards them or for the miracles they work in our favor. It is this - but much more.

We are given saints as examples of how to make our lives mirrors of the image of Christ in our day-to-day living. The above opening prayer for the feast of St. Gerard continues: "Grant, we pray, the following the example of his life, we may be transformed in the same image."

There is often a piece missing in our devotions to the saints when we center only on their extraordinary reputation for miracles. They are given to us by the Church as examples of Christian witness to the Gospel. Following their example is a necessary component in

our prayers and devotions. It is this imitation of the virtues in their lives which adds power to our prayers and petitions for special favors.

In the case of St. Gerard, what are some of the parts of his life we can imitate? It requires that we have knowledge of his life as a Redemptorist and influenced him to be made a saint, especially the patron of Mothers.

Gerard only lived five years as a religious brother in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, the Redemptorists. He was remarkable for his apostolic zeal, his patience in sickness, his love for the poor, his spirit of penance, his humility and his constancy in prayer.

He wrote numerous letters of spiritual direction to a variety of people—both lay people and religious men and women. The Lord favored him with numerous spiritual gifts that he used freely for all who came to him.

*Grant, we pray,
that following
the example
of St. Gerard's
life, we may be
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same image.*

He is still giving freely of his many gifts to us today.

When we pray to St. Gerard for the urgent needs of children or for the gift of a child, we add power to our request when take on the attitudes and actions of Gerard in our daily lives. In other words, when we are a "Gerard" today in our daily living.

The above description of his gifts that he used in the service of others encourages us to extend ourselves in service towards others. Gerard was an instrument of the healing presence

of Christ in his daily interaction with people. We too have opportunities to serve the poor, to pray for those who express their needs to us. We can develop a structure of daily prayer and encourage others to pray with us for the needs of our world.

Gerard was a people-centered person. His spiritual life was connected with the many chores he was responsible for in the monastery. People were always happy to see Brother Gerard. They would invite him into their poor homes to share a meal and conversation. Gerard was not one those saints who was unapproachable and removed from people. Even today, when talking about Brother Gerard, people will say with great enthusiasm - "San Gerardo is our friend!"

When praying to this great saint who still attracts so many people to his intercession, let us be reminded that the greatness of his saintly qualities lies in his familiarity with God. He conversed often with God. His practice doing the ordinary activities of daily life with great love is a wonderful example for us.

For Gerard, the presence of God was alive and real. He suffered much with many sicknesses in his life, but he would never let this take away his joy and friendliness. We all have many difficulties in lives. Our devotion to St. Gerard is the result of serious needs regarding conception and sicknesses that affect our children.

Let our request for the help of St. Gerard connect with our imitation of the attitudes and virtues. In our great need, may we lovingly attend to the needs of others in our midst. This will most certainly add power to our prayers.

Let us often echo the sentiments of the little girl at his shrine in Italy. "Thank you St. Gerard, for all your kindness towards us."

Bro. Dan Korn's most recent book is Embracing the Icon of Love.

Praying with Faith Makes a Difference

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

Barbara and Jim had struggled for years with infertility. The two times they were able to conceive ended in miscarriages. They consulted medical professionals and, with deep faith, prayed for St. Gerard Majella's intercession as the Mothers' Saint.

Finally, after seven years, Barbara was pregnant again but having a difficult pregnancy. It looked as though the delivery would not be easy either. She wrote to St. Gerard's Facebook page requesting prayers. She expressed her deep faith in the God who Jesus reveals as a merciful Father, professed her devotion to St. Gerard, and shared her desire to live the evangelical life of a follower of Jesus Christ.

Undoubtedly many of St. Gerard's Prayer Angels saw the posting and prayed with and for Barbara and Jim. Their prayers were heard. Barbara proceeded safely through a healthy pregnancy and the uncomplicated delivery of a healthy baby girl. Barbara and Jim's hearts were overwhelmed with a profound gratitude for God who had visited them and looked with favor upon them. He blessed them with the grace to conceive, bear and deliver a beautiful, healthy baby girl. This experience deepened their faith and trust in God, their devotion to St. Gerard and their commitment to live the Gospel message of Jesus as faithful disciples.

Devotion to St. Gerard Is a Way to Pass on the Gift of Faith to Others

What is the relationship between living, witnessing and preaching the Gospel and a devout relationship with holy St. Gerard Majella? The story of Barbara and Jim illustrates this intimate connection.

In my administration of the Saint Gerard Majella – The Mothers' Saint Facebook page I came upon this comment:

"Why do saints only do miracles that occur naturally anyway. I bet the woman who the saint helped to get pregnant took the precaution of having sex as well – just in case. Why has no saint ever performed the miracle of curing a severed limb? The number of unexplained 'cures' in Lourdes is exactly the same statistically as in the general population. So don't waste time praying for stuff – it won't make a blind bit of difference."

Rarely, if ever, do I come across comments like this one among the thousands that are posted on St. Gerard's website. The vast majority of comments are positive and faith-filled.

That's why this comment really stuck out and struck me. Most of the comments are beautiful and need no further comment, but I felt this one deserved some careful reflection and a well thought out response.

First of all, it is important to remember that God alone has miraculous power. Often saints and others can be intermediaries or channels of God's miraculous powers touching the lives of people. Sometimes God's miraculous power is granted to someone for some specific purpose.

We can speak of miracles in a broad sense and in a narrow sense. In the broad sense, all of creation, the whole universe, all of "nature", awesome and beautiful, is one fantabulous miracle because God gives awesome existence to all things. So all miracles do occur "naturally", that is "in nature", in God's wonderful universe. When you see the world with the eyes of faith, every moment of every day is a miracle.

In the strict sense, miracles are events or happenings that seem to work beyond or outside of what we consider "natural." They are often called "supernatural" occurrences. One thing we need to humbly recognize is that human knowledge about and understanding of the universe or "nature", if you will, as fantastic as we think it is, is extremely limited. Human arrogance about how much we think we know too often blinds us to see many things in new and wondrous ways.

What we think is unnatural or supernatural may well be understood as quite natural one day. Most miracles do occur naturally, although they wouldn't necessarily need to occur naturally. They occur by God's power to intervene in that which God has created, what we call "natural." We find what we call "laws" of nature, but as time passes we also find that our so-called "laws" are not laws at all. They are just an expression of our limited understanding of the universe, at a given moment.

To see and experience miracles, then, to be sensitive to the miraculous in our lives, requires a vision of life, of the universe, based on faith. As we know, faith is a gift from God. It is not something we can acquire merely by our own efforts. The gift of faith is available to all people, and given to all who seek it and ask for it. And faith is more about loving trust in someone we know than about belief in dogmatic statements that can too easily be turned into idols. In other words, having faith is more about knowing and loving God than knowing things about God. All people are given the



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On this Feast of St. Gerard Majella, the Redemptorists send a fond greeting and God's blessing to all mothers.

For a year now we have had a special place for veneration of St. Gerard's image through his shrine here in the chapel of our provincial offices in Denver. Along with the statue, one can also find the League of St. Gerard Enrollment Book, which contains the names of the 13,643 members who joined the League before the headquarters moved to Denver, and the nearly 1,700 who have enrolled in the last two years. It is important to remember that every Wednesday, in this same chapel, Mass is offered for all the members of the League and their intentions.

Praying *continued*

ability to seek to know, love and trust God. Sometimes some people resist this and, for many reasons, become defiant and belligerent toward God, claiming disbelief and scoffing at the faith of others.

What we must remember is that faith, truly a gift from God, is like a seed that needs well-prepared soil to grow and needs to be nourished lest it die of hunger—something St. Gerard teaches us by his own life. Though we cannot acquire that faith which is a loving, trusting relationship with God by our own efforts, we must still make efforts to prepare good soil in our hearts and seek nourishment for our faith.

We have many things to help us in our efforts to be open to faith and for feeding our faith: prayer, meditation, contemplation, and the sacramental life of the church—especially the Eucharist.



In this sacred act, Jesus nourishes and strengthens our faith and the life of his Holy Spirit within us with his own Body and Blood. He said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you." (John 6:53)

Without God's grace and life within us, we cannot believe in all that is miraculous. We will not ask for miracles and will not see them happen around us constantly. With quiet, solid, humble faith we will see and experience the miraculous and loving power of God in our lives. So, yes, undoubtedly, we must pray for miracles, because God hears us and will act on our behalf to make all things work together for the good. Praying with faith does make a difference.

Perhaps we do well to ponder a quote often attributed to Albert Einstein: "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is." Which do you choose?

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.

THANKSGIVING/PRAYER REQUEST FROM ANA KRISTINA

I would like to say a Thanksgiving prayer for my safe delivery and for my healthy baby. Thank you for praying for us when I was still pregnant. Please continue to pray for my baby to stay healthy and safe. Thank you. Amen.



ANONYMOUS THANKSGIVING

On November 18, 2015 my husband and I were included in your Prayer Flower of Hope. The following month, after over five very long years of trying, we found out our prayers had been answered and we were with child. Now our Lord's precious gift, our baby boy, is a month old. Thank you Saint Gerard Majella for your intercession, and to all who prayed for us. Thank you so much! God bless you all. Saint Gerard, please guide me to be a good mother.

THANKSGIVING FROM FRAN AND VINCENT

Dear Saint Gerard, my whole family would like to thank you for your intercession, for now we are complete. We welcomed our son, our rainbow baby, on April 28th. By the grace of our Lord, Mother Mary, and your intercession, I was able to deliver a healthy and beautiful baby boy. Thank you to all those who prayed with us since the beginning when we asked for prayers to conceive a child. Now the greatest gift from God is in our arms. May you continue to be an intercessor and a source of strength and hope for all the families praying for a child and other related intentions.

THANKSGIVING/TESTIMONY FROM MELENTHA

I want to thank St. Gerard for all the blessings and prayers that were offered during my pregnancy. It was a miracle baby for us. I was blessed with a healthy baby boy on January 14, 2016. We named him Tahan (which means "merciful" in the Bible). This week he will be four months old. Please continue to pray for his good health always. The nine-month novena is so powerful that it protected me all throughout my pregnancy. Thank you, Jesus, for a little angel in our lives. We prayed almost two years for the gift of a baby. All those praying for the gift of child should and must continue to pray, because miracles do happen. May God bless all mothers and all who wants to be mothers. Amen.

THANKSGIVING/TESTIMONY FROM SWAROOPA

I am Swaroopa and this is my testimony. All through my pregnancy, I prayed to St. Gerard Majella for the health of my child and for a painless, normal delivery as I was very afraid of pain. My child was due on November 24th, and we

Testimonials *continued*

were expecting him much before that, but I didn't show any signs of labor, even as the due date approached. The doctor planned to induce labor on the morning of the 23rd, but I decided to wait and pray. All good things come to those who wait for the Lord. I went into labor naturally on the evening of the 23rd, and delivered a healthy baby boy on the morning of the 24th. I also didn't feel the pains of labor as I kept praying and giving thanks to God at every contraction. When I look back on the entire experience, I know it was St. Gerard Majella who was interceding with God to shield me from labor pains. In the end I had a painless, normal delivery and I owe it to St. Gerard Majella and my Lord.

THANKSGIVING FROM MAUREEN

I am sending my thanksgiving for prayers answered. I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl on July 14th.

A PRAYER TO ST. GERARD FOR A SAFE DELIVERY

O great Saint Gerard, beloved servant of Jesus Christ, perfect imitator of your meek and humble Savior, and devoted child of Mother of God, enkindle within my heart one spark of that heavenly fire of charity which glowed in your heart and made you an angel of love. O glorious Saint Gerard, because when falsely accused of crime, you did bear, like your Divine Master, without murmur or complaint, the calumnies of wicked men, you have been raised up by God as the patron and protector of expectant mothers. Preserve me from danger and from the excessive pains accompanying childbirth, and shield the child which I now carry, that it may see the light of day and receive the purifying and life-giving waters of baptism through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



THANKSGIVING FROM JEN AND JOE

We have prayers of thanksgiving!!! On Tuesday we found out that we were matched with a sibling pair, a boy 8 and a girl 5. St. Gerard helped intercede to make me a mother! Thank you for posting my prayer requests. God is so good! Thank you so much and I will continue to pray for all of the women waiting for their blessings. God is so good!

ANONYMOUS THANKSGIVING AND TESTIMONY

I am praying for a safe delivery for my baby and me. God is great. Father, allow me to share this with you. My husband and I got married five years ago. We started trying for a baby after two years of marriage. I experienced a miscarriage, and that was the most painful, heartbreaking experience of my life. Then, after six months, when we tried again, I had a chemical pregnancy (a very early miscarriage). So then I was afraid to try again. But I never lost hope or stopped praying....until one day. Would you believe, Father, on the website, on Facebook, I saw the novena. It was October of last year. Then I prayed the novena, wholeheartedly and faithfully. I never told anyone at the time. I finished the novena on October 16th, the feast of St. Gerard. The next month or weeks of the cycle, no period, immediately, pregnant! And then I told my husband. We both prayed the nine-day novena together. Every day I was praying to God, Mama Mary and for St. Gerard's intercession. God is great. In God's time, all things become possible. I continue to follow St. Gerard's Facebook page, praying for those who ask for prayers and I keep sharing it with friends. I keep telling my friends and everyone I know. God's Miracle. Thank you Lord, Mama Mary and St. Gerard. Amen.



Prayer to St. Gerard

Beloved St. Gerard, on this day when we recall how you ultimately surrendered your entire life completely to God and commemorate your entrance into our heavenly home, we celebrate your feast, your definitive passage through death to the fullness of life.

We seek your blessing, especially for all mothers, mothers-to-be and those longing to be mothers. Please intercede and obtain for all mothers the graces they most need at this moment, to persevere in living their motherly vocation, with loving arms and hearts, patient love, quiet joy and undying hope.

Amen.

