

# Saint Gerard

Lent Day Issue • 2016

NEWSLETTER

## Pilgrimage to Materdomini

Site of the Tomb of Saint Gerard Majella Attracts Pilgrims

*Materdomini in southern Italy is home to an ancient chapel dedicated to Santa Maria Materdomini. On October 16, 1755, Gerard Majella died in this chapel and was buried there. He was canonized in 1904. At the shrine of St. Gerard Majella at Materdomini you can visit the new and old basilica, where the tomb of Saint Gerard Majella is located.*

*Redemptorist Bro. John Matthys, C.Ss.R. experienced a faith-defining pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. Gerard Majella in Materdomini, Italy. He shares with you here his experiences from that trip.*

By Bro. John Matthys, C.Ss.R.

**S**ome eight years ago, I and 60 of my English-speaking Redemptorist confreres from around the world had the privilege and the honor

to attend a Redemptorist Spirituality workshop in Rome. Completing our experience were visitations to holy shrines associated with the Redemptorists.

One momentous day of our journey, we boarded buses and made our way to the shrine and burial crypt of St. Gerard Majella at Materdomini (Italy). The crowds were enormous, as dozens of tour buses filled the vast parking lot that led to the older church where St. Gerard is entombed. Just behind this older church is a very spacious church that can accommodate the large groups of pilgrims. I was deeply moved being in the presence of St. Gerard's tomb. This was truly holy ground, and all the pilgrims seemed to recognize the sacredness of this holy place.

We had the opportunity to see the



room in which St. Gerard both lived and died. Above the door of his room,

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### Dear Friend of St. Gerard,

I pray that all those devoted to St. Gerard Majella and all the members of the League of Saint Gerard know the blessings of Our Savior Jesus. May Lent be a special time for conversion as you strengthen your faith and trust in God through your devotion to The Mothers' Saint.

This Lenten edition of the League of St. Gerard eNewsletter includes Br. John Matthys' story of visiting Materdomini, Italy, where St. Gerard lived his last days. In the second article, Fr. Joe Dorsey shares his thoughts on evangelization and a living faith, especially devotion to St. Gerard. Finally, there are wonderful testimonials to help give you hope and joy on your Lenten journey.

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



## Pilgrimage *continued*

St. Gerard placed this sign:

“Here the will of God is done, when God wills it, as God wills it, and as long as God wills it.”

The lower level of this holy shrine was a museum honoring St. Gerard. Large framed paintings lined the walls, depicting many events in his brief religious Redemptorist life. We viewed some of his artwork of the Redeemer and Mary, the Madonna.

There is a very special room which, for the lack of a better term, I will call “The St. Gerard Miracle Room.” This rather immense space has hundreds of thousands of blue and pink ribbons hanging from the ceiling and walls, all representing a special favor or miracle granted by Almighty God through the intercession of St. Gerard.

Another view of the Shrine to St. Gerard Majella in Materdomini

On another wall, surrounding both a life-size statue and large, framed painting of St. Gerard, there are thousands and thousands of photographs. The collage, behind protective glass, includes pictures of children, mothers with their children, and photos of entire families—all sent to the St. Gerard Shrine in thanksgiving to God for favors received through St. Gerard’s intercession.

Lighted votive candles adorn almost every corner of this room! I was completely surprised and amazed by what I saw! St. Gerard is interceding and taking our modest petitions to the very throne of God! This entire space revealed a man of prayer, simplicity, loving of God and having complete confidence in God.

St. Gerard Majella demonstrates still today that he promotes human life and desires that all the followers of Jesus do the same. I believe that if we follow the example of St. Gerard, we too will experience God’s special love for us and for those so dear to us.

St. Gerard is truly alive and his presence can be felt by through devotion that is so prevalent. Almighty God is certainly using his son Gerard to touch peoples’ hearts and souls. May God reveal His presence to us through our heartfelt association with St. Gerard, The Mothers’ Saint.

*Bro. John Matthys, C.Ss.R. currently serves elderly and infirm Redemptorists at St. Clement’s Health Care Center in Liguori, MO and is a regular contributor to the League of St. Gerard.*

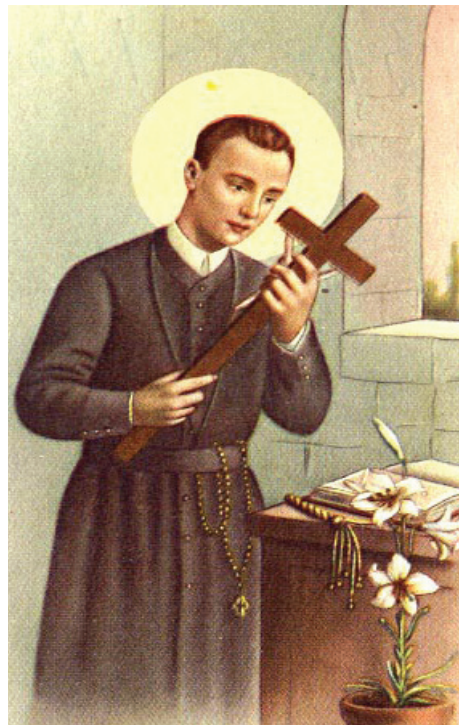
# Faith, Evangelization and Devotion to Saint Gerard Majella

*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.

Similarly, your devotion to St. Gerard Majella, a humble Redemptorist brother and The Mothers’ Saint, leads you to deeper faith and trust in

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*The gift of faith comes to you  
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the Word, as well as the  
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## **Faith** *continued*

the God. St. Gerard strove to emulate the love and worship shown to the Father by Jesus, as well as the greater commitment to live according to the Gospel in loving communion with God and all that God has created.

Devotion to saints, like evangelization, is about passing on the gift of faith and helping people to know God in a real, experiential way. God is the One who loves, heals, strengthens and feels compassion for you. You see these traits revealed most especially in the mysteries of the Incarnation of the Word and the Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Faith is a gift that only God can bestow on those who seek God's merciful face.

This gift of faith comes to you through the living and preaching of the Word, as well as the witness of love-filled people.

These living testimonies include a special love and devotion for the friends of God who the Church recognizes as saints. By the grace of God, our saints lived heroically holy lives. Following Mary's example, the saints always point to Jesus, who leads you to the Father through the gift and life of the Holy Spirit dwelling within you.

## **We Are Called to Live and Proclaim the Gospel**

Evangelization is the fundamental mission of the whole Church. Our proclamation of the Gospel to people today is a service rendered both to the Christian community and all of humanity. Our efforts can be oppressed by fear and distress, but ultimately lifted up by hope in Christ.

All the People of God are called to live and proclaim the Gospel from the moment of baptism. Our Yes! to God includes a commitment to make God's redeeming love known to the whole world. This is a saintly task, and all the saints of God are called to make God's love known in all places and at all times—each according to his or her station in life.

Evangelization does not consist of only the preaching and teaching of doctrine. Evangelization must touch life. First, the natural life to which it gives new meaning, thanks to the evangelical perspectives that it reveals. Second, the supernatural life, which is not the negation but the purification and elevation of the natural life. The role of evangelization is precisely to educate people in the faith in such a way as

to lead each individual Christian to live a sacramental and evangelical life of faith.

Popular religiosity, which includes our devotion to the saints, is an important form of evangelization. It manifests a thirst for God which the simple and poor know best. It makes people capable of generosity and sacrifice to the point of heroism. Popular religiosity involves an acute awareness of the profound providence and loving, constant presence of God. It engenders interior attitudes rarely observed elsewhere with the same passion: patience, devotion, openness and self-sacrifice. Because of these aspects, we readily call it "popular piety"—the religion of the people.

## **The Saints Are Role Models for How to Live the New Life of Grace**

The saints teach you how to live the Gospel in the concrete, historical context of day-to-day life. They did this heroically, overcoming all kinds of obstacles, weaknesses, and failures.

Becoming a saint is something done in you by the grace of God, but always with your active and conscious participation. God totally and absolutely respects your freedom to choose to love or to not love.

The saints are your role models, giving you examples of how to live the new life of grace. They inspire you and lead you to God through Jesus Christ. Their witness is pleasing to God. God is never jealous of his saints and their place in our life of faith. God loves all his saints and is happy to designate one or the other for some specific purpose, such as St. Gerard Majella as The Mothers' Saint.

St. Gerard lived the gospel. He was a true disciple of Jesus Christ. He and Jesus had the same God. He had a profound trust in God. He learned early and never forgot the fundamental importance of seeking the will of God in all things. He knew that a loving, merciful God can only will what is best for you.

Too often you and I cannot see what is best for us, nor understand what is happening. Yet faith calls for trust, at times blindly, in God who does love us. He loves us in every moment and place, absolutely and unconditionally. In the end, the living God of Life will raise us up and fill us with an eternal life.

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# Testimonials



**A**lmost 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.

## AN ANONYMOUS THANKSGIVING

Dear St. Gerard, thank you for the greatest miracle. You have given me the gift of motherhood through my baby, Francis, last September 20th. I had a rough pregnancy because I had a low lying placenta, so I prayed for you to help me. When I had my last ultrasound, my doctor told me my placenta had migrated upward and that I would have a normal delivery. I thank you St. Gerard for your miracle. I knew that you would never fail me. I could feel you and Mama Mary by my side when I was in labor. Thank you.



## AN ANONYMOUS THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR A SAFE DELIVERY

Dear Saint Gerard Majella, I want to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to God for the safe delivery of my twin babies, a girl and a boy, and for good health for my babies and me all through the period of my pregnancy and even after delivery. I also want to thank St. Gerard Majella for his intercession. I pray that God who has blessed me with these bundles of joy will also bless all those who seek the fruit of the womb with healthy pregnancies and safe de-

liveries. All this I ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Thank you very much.

## AN ANONYMOUS THANKSGIVING

My deepest gratitude to Saint Gerard, for my daughter just celebrated her first birthday on October 19th. We both almost lost our lives when I gave birth to her last year. My uterus had already exploded before she was taken out. My blood pressure that moment dropped to 40/20. Red Cross blood came at just the right time. Daily, for my entire pregnancy I was praying to Saint Gerard. Forever will I hold dear Saint Gerard and share his devotion with other mothers.

## THANKSGIVING FROM NELY

Dear St. Gerard allow me to give thanks for my safe delivery last October 24, 2015. My husband and I are so happy. This happiness, which includes the rest of our family, is priceless. My little boy is the first baby born to both my husband and me. Thank you for guiding me all the way through a safe delivery.



## THANKSGIVING FROM TYLER

Gerard was born three months ago, on August 5th. We visited the shrine in Newark on his feast day to say thank you. We found out we conceived on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, after praying a Novena to St. Gerard. And that was after having no luck for 18 months.

## THANKSGIVING FROM APRIL

Last May 30, I asked you to pray for me and my 16th week pregnancy. Now, I just want to offer a thanksgiving because I gave birth to healthy baby girl last October 20th. As a

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## Testimonials *continued*

woman who took seven years to conceive, I continuously pray for those who seek to have a baby. Just have faith, because nothing is impossible with God. Thank God with us, for giving us the chance to become parents. Thank you, St. Gerard, for your guidance. God is good all the time.

### THANKSGIVING FROM JACQUELINE

I'm with my baby. We're both OK and healthy. I'm very thankful for this blessing. A gift of life from our dear Lord, Jesus Christ. His name is Liam Arison. You can post my thanksgiving prayer for everyone to see. I would like to request continuous and unconditional love from our dear Lord God. Through the intercession of St. Gerald Majella and other angels of God. Thank you very much.



### THANKSGIVING FROM KALINE

I would like to send my thanksgiving to our Prayer Angels and St. Gerard for my safe delivery last October and for my son's good health after being diagnosed with pneumonia when I gave birth to him.



It was very painful for my husband and me to leave our son in NICU because he needed to be monitored closely and for his pediatrician to help treat his pneumonia. After ten days, he was finally home and with the help of prayers from family and friends. He's doing fine now. I thank the Lord for taking care of us, especially our son. Thank you, St. Gerard for being with us all the way through. May God bless us all. This is our

son, Ethan Lucas. Thank you, Lord for giving him to us. Amen. God be blessed!

### THANKSGIVING FROM CHRISTINA

I would like to share this good news with everyone. Here are pictures of my baby, Zachary (his name means God Remembered), whom I delivered last September 27th. Thank you for supporting my pregnancy with your prayers and kind words whenever I asked for your help and prayers. My baby and I stayed in the hospital for additional days because his WBC was elevated. Thankfully he was cured by antibiotics. Sepsis was ruled out. His newborn screening test returned positive for CAH, but repeat tests proved it negative afterwards. I believe it was God affirming to me that my baby would be safe when I received my certificate of membership in the League of St. Gerard along with the medal, booklet and prayer card on same day I gave birth. Thank you everyone. Keep the faith! I joined this Facebook group when I miscarried with my first baby and it has brought me comfort and strength, and now I have little Zachary with me!



### THANKSGIVING FROM RENNOEL

Good morning. God bless us all. This is John Matthew. His operation was very successful. We are so very thankful, oh God, and St. Gerard Majella. Thank you for making my little boy happy and back to his normal life. Amen. Please continue praying for his fast recovery. Thank you for the blessings.

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## 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.



## Testimonials *continued*

### THANKSGIVING FROM KRISTEN



I just want to thank you for your prayers. Our baby was born early on October 22, 2015 at 37 weeks, 4 days, but she is happy and healthy! I found extreme comfort in your site throughout my pregnancy! You may share! Prayers are always a wonderful thing and our little pumpkin will greatly appreciate everyone's well wishes. Thank

you so much she is truly a blessing. We are so lucky.

### THANKSGIVING FROM PAUL

God is so great and gave us Baby Gerard Castiel (named after Saint Gerard Majella) who was born on December 3, 2015 at exactly 3:13 pm, with a healthy weight of almost 8 lbs. He is still in the baby room and they are monitoring all his vital signs. We are still asking for your prayers that everything will be fine for our baby. Thank you Saint Gerard Majella for praying for us and, indeed in Jesus' name and will, everything is possible. Just have faith. Amen. Thank you very much Saint Gerard Majella.



### A THANKSGIVING PRAYER FROM AILEEN



Lord, together with Mama Mary, St. Joseph and through the intercession of St. Gerard Majella and the other saints I prayed with, I would like to give thanks to you for being able to deliver safely a healthy, full-term baby girl. It was a tough pregnancy indeed. But as long as I live, together with my family, we will be a living

testimony to the power of prayers. To God be the glory. Amen. I also want to thank everyone who prayed together with me, six months ago. I am praying that all prayer petitions will be granted in God's time. Thank you.

### THANKSGIVING FROM MARIA JOAN

I am happy to announce that I have already given birth to my daughter named Maria Georgina Antonette via normal delivery, with just a little less than one hour of labor. Thank you for your prayers and for the guidance of St. Gerard Majella. I am glad that I was able to have a healthy, safe and normal delivery. Thank you so much for all your prayers. I am really overwhelmed. Have a blessed day.



### THANKSGIVING FROM GREAT GRANDMOTHER ANN

Thank you, St. Gerard Majella, for your intercession and the safe delivery of our first great grandchild, Killian Liam. We give thanks and praise to Almighty God. Amen.

