



League of

The Redemptorists  
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# ST. GERARD

SPRING 2005

Newsletter

Year of  
St. Gerard  
Majella

October 2004-  
October 2005



100 Years  
a Saint

Canonized by  
Pope St. Pius X  
December 11, 1904



250 Years  
With God

St. Gerard died  
October 16, 1755

## Living with Simplicity, Serenity, and Freedom

DAVID WERTHMANN

Whenever a person encountered Brother Gerard he or she was immediately attracted by the profound serenity he exuded. Gerard cherished each individual human being and all of creation as gifts from God. Yet, the spirit of simplicity that ruled his entire life gave him such great freedom from attachment to particular persons and possessions that he was available to anyone for any need at any time.

### Simplicity

Consumerism is a disease of our modern society. Advertising makes us feel as though we are not good enough unless we have all the latest products. The truth is, the more we have the more we want. It seems to be part of our nature as humans never to be satisfied with what we have. We always want a bigger, better, newer model. This past Christmas season it was reported that over eight billion dollars was charged on credit cards. Where will people ever get that much money to pay off their debts for all those things they just *had* to have?

The opposite of consumerism is simplicity. With less things to worry about we will have less stress in our lives.

We will find great satisfaction in a single wildflower, a homemade cookie, the hug of a small child. On the other hand, wealthy people need security systems and alarms to protect what they own. They are forced to build barriers between themselves and others because they have so many "things." In effect, what they own *owns them*.

But if we don't have a lot of stuff, then we don't have to worry about having much to lose, and we don't have to protect our things. Without being a slave to all our gadgets and other possessions, we will be freer to live life, and we will find greater serenity because we will obtain greater satisfaction from the simple pleasures the world offers.

## Serenity

Brother Gerard believed strongly that God's "cause" had to also be his cause here on earth. Spiritual writers call that characteristic *uniformity to God's will*. It means that through prayer we become so in tune with God, that we begin to desire the same things God desires. Gerard was so sure that he was following God's will that he maintained a remarkable serenity even when he was punished for something he had not done, or when his image was falsely tarnished.

He trusted God totally. That's not easy to do. Each of us has

feelings of insecurity about something. But Jesus told us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid" (John 14:27). If we believe deep down in our hearts that God is truly with us day and night, no matter what kind of a fix we get ourselves into, then we will feel the serenity of God's presence or, as St. Paul calls it, "the peace of God, which surpasses understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

That kind of serenity comes only from remaining close to God through prayer and use of the sacraments. As Catholics, the

St. Gerard,  
solely  
desirous of  
pleasing God,  
pray for us.

Eucharist is the very center of our lives. And daily private prayer is what helps us put our troubles in proper perspective. It reassures us that God is still with us and loves us no matter what. Just as

children run to their moms and dads for safety and reassurance when they are frightened or anxious, we can find a renewed sense of peace and serenity if we frequently run to God in prayer.

## Freedom

St. Gerard looked upon all events in life—whether happy or unfortunate—through eyes of faith. Thus, he interpreted whatever happened as the work of the Holy Spirit in some way. Brother Gerard once made a personal vow to do "what seems to me to be the most perfect before God." Even that promise came from his great sense of personal freedom for he was not strongly attached even to his own ideas, his own needs or his own wants. That's also what allowed him to practice the virtue of obedience so easily. He believed God's will came from his superiors, and so a simple gesture or word from the one in charge was enough for him to carry out very difficult tasks.

God wants us to live in freedom. Free will is no doubt the greatest gift God bestowed upon human beings at the time of our creation. Later, Jesus' death and resurrection liberated us from the

### St. Gerard's Help for Sinners

Lent is a traditional time for celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation. Indeed, it is most appropriate to review and atone for our faults and weaknesses before celebrating the Lord's resurrection on Easter. Brother Gerard could read the hearts of sinners. When he confronted someone who was not living up to God's call to holiness, that person could not resist and would immediately repent. Here is a prayer to St. Gerard for help in making a good confession.

**St. Gerard,** patron of a good confession, you give courage to souls when fear and shame has overcome them.

You give sorrow to their hearts, resolution to their wills, and truth to their faltering lips. Help me to make a good confession. Enable me to know my sins, to be truly sorry for them, and to be firmly resolved, with God's grace, never to sin again. Help me to confess my sins humbly and sincerely; to confess them to our Lord himself. Stand by me in this confession, gentle saint. Amen.

St. Gerard,  
zealous  
promoter  
of the  
conversion  
of sinners,  
pray for us.

condemnation that resulted from sin when we used our free will for evil purposes. What more could God possibly do for us?

The kinds of simplicity and serenity described above—the kinds St. Gerard lived—lead to true freedom. They are not excuses that allow us to forsake our responsibilities. But they do help prevent our lives from becoming cluttered with useless things that can weigh us down and deter us from building God's true kingdom here on earth.

Each of us needs to examine our lives from time to time, and reflect on the burdens we impose upon ourselves. If our lives are relatively uncomplicated, and we feel at peace with the direction our life is headed, then we can be certain that we have acquired the kind of spirituality St. Gerard lived. God will bless us. And we will be even more free to follow the example of our beloved saint in his love for God. Pray to St. Gerard for these graces.

Adapted from "Gerard's Spirituality"  
by Sabatino Majorano in *Saint Gerard Majella: His Writings and Spirituality*,  
Noel Londoño, editor,  
Liguori Publications



## **Welcome!**

### **Prayers for New and Pregnant Parents**

KATHLEEN FINLEY

Expecting and raising a new baby is an exciting time in life filled with hope, anxiousness, optimism, and wonder. This collection of prayers contains simple and heartfelt prayers for all the stages of a child's life from pre-conception to the first birthday. This beautiful little book is a great way for parents, grandparents, stepparents, siblings, and even birth coaches to appreciate God's miracle of new life. It gives reasons to ask God's blessings at a time when they are needed so much.

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## **TRYING TO BECOME PREGNANT**

*Loving God,  
author of all life,  
we long to have a child,  
if that is your will for us.*

*As we try  
to begin a pregnancy,  
help us to remember that  
life is in your hands,  
not ours,  
and that you always have  
our deepest welfare  
in mind.*

*Help us to be patient—  
even when that is hard—  
knowing that you will call  
us to the responsibility  
of being parents when,  
and if, that is the best way  
for us to grow and to know  
you more deeply.*

*In the meantime,  
help us to use our gifts  
to help make your world  
a better place.*

*Please bless all parents and  
all those—like us—  
who would like  
to be parents.*

*Give us the graces  
to do well whatever  
you call us to do.*

*Amen.*

*From Welcome!  
Prayers for New and Pregnant Parents  
by Kathleen Finley*

**From a letter  
of St. Gerard  
to "a Gentleman":**

*I have received your most valued letter. If your lordship is faithful to God, he will help you. God knows how much I regret your sufferings. May the Holy Spirit be the one who shows you how much more must be suffered out of love for him who suffered so much out of love for us.*

*My brother in Jesus Christ, have patience in your tribulations, because God permits all this for your welfare. God wants to save your soul and wishes for you to change your life.*

*One thing is necessary: endure everything with resignation to the divine will, since that will help you for your eternal salvation. Go back to the basics, which are the best weapon against temptations. Hope with living faith that you will obtain everything from our dear God.*

# The Heart of the Matter

## **From Missouri**

My husband and I tried for two years to get pregnant. We had so many prayers working for us that our belief stayed high, even during some of the rough times. My mother shared the story of St. Gerard with me and I started receiving the newsletter. My husband and I faithfully prayed to St. Gerard and within the year we were expecting twins. Through our prayers and belief, my husband and I were able to support several other friends who were struggling with infertility. Our girls are now fifteen months old and we still get the newsletter and say our prayers of Thanksgiving. Just after receiving our last edition of the newsletter we found out that we are expecting our third child. Miracles happen in so many ways.

## **From Illinois**

Please pray for my husband and I. We have been trying to conceive a child since our marriage two years ago. The doctors have told us that I have some medical problems and it will take a miracle for us to have a baby. I am young and the doctors do not understand why this has happened at my age. I am so sad and cry often. We long to be parents and to raise a child in the faith. Please pray that Jesus will have mercy on us.

## **From the Internet**

Please pray that I may conceive a child. I have one daughter and want so much to give her siblings. I prayed very hard to St. Gerard to have her and after almost two years my sweet girl was born. My aunt gave me her relic of St. Gerard and I have been trying for over three years to become pregnant again. I passed my St. Gerard medal along to one of the nurses helping me through various medical conditions and she has become pregnant. I believe in the power of prayer and ask that you pray that I may have another child.



Please send your prayer requests and thanksgiving letters to the address on page one or to [miss-spon@liguori.org](mailto:miss-spon@liguori.org). These addresses may also be used for address changes, to request missed issues, or to remove someone from or add someone to our mailing list.