

Sharing God's Love

Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ,
I rejoice
that you sent
your Son to us.

As we wait for his return
at the end of time,
we live in hope.
May our hearts
be filled with
the joy you promised
when we live this life
you gave us.

As a caring follower
of Jesus,
help me to bring
a sign of your love
to others in my life,
not that they
may praise me,
but that they, too,
may taste the joy
of the One who is to
come in glory.

I ask these things
through Jesus
in the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

From *The People's Prayer Book*.
Carole Garibaldi Rogers and
Mary Ann Jeselson, editors,
Liguori Publications

The Heart of the Matter

From California

My daughter had two miscarriages within three years. I asked St. Gerard Majella to pray for her someday to be able to carry a baby to term. Shortly after my daughter told my husband and me that she was pregnant for a third time. This time when I saw the ultrasound picture I saw what was to become my first grandchild.

St. Gerard Majella prayed for my daughter to carry a healthy baby to term. My grandson was born healthy a few months later.

I shall always thank St. Gerard for praying for my daughter, her husband, and our grandson.

From Nebraska

Our prayer request is to St. Gerard that my husband and I will conceive and bring a healthy child of God into this world. The doctors say we don't have much hope since I have lost a tube due to ectopic pregnancy. We are praying and have confidence in God that it will happen.

From E-mail

My husband and I were blessed with a beautiful and healthy baby boy after countless prayers to St. Gerard. And now, we have been praying for more than a year for a second miracle without success. Please pray for us.

From E-mail

Please pray to St. Gerard for my husband and I to conceive. It has been a long road for us and we are now awaiting test results. St. Gerard has been a positive influence so far and I am hoping through prayers to him we can bring a new baby into our lives.

Please send your prayer requests and thanksgiving letters to the address on page one or to miss-spon@liguori.org. These addresses may also be used to report an address change, to request missed issues, or to remove someone from or add someone to our mailing list.



League of

ST. GERARD

WINTER 2005

Newsletter

The Redemptorists
One Liguori Drive • Liguori, MO 63057-9999 • www.liguori.org

*A Prayer
O good
St. Gerard,
you are a model
for us in prayer,
in love for God,
and in all of life.
Increase my desire
for God and
give me a loving,
cheerful outlook
on life so that I,
too, may plant
the seeds of
God's holiness
in the world.
Amen.*

A Life of Joy

DAVID WERTHMANN

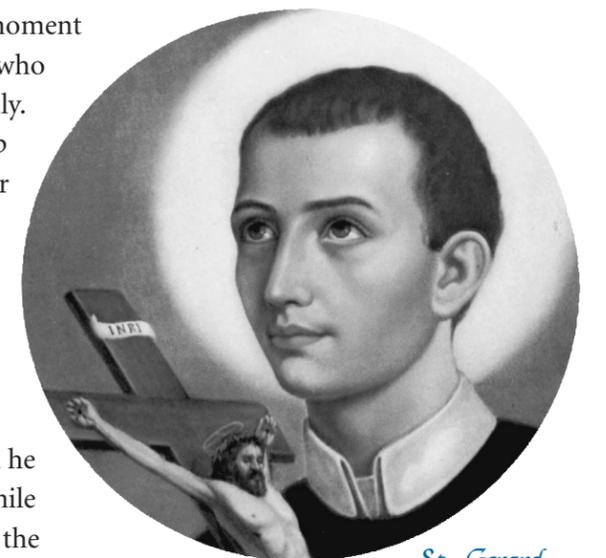
During Gerard's short life, he lived almost constantly with a joyful disposition. As a boy in school, his teachers reported that he was always cheerful in class. A little older, when he began to work, he frequently got in trouble from the suspicions that arose because of his unusually pleasant demeanor. For example, while working in a tailor shop he was once reported to have chosen the wrong moment to laugh at the foreman, who did not respond too kindly. He even managed to keep smiling while working for a rather quick-tempered bishop.

As a Brother, Gerard maintained that reputation as well. He would laugh with glee at jokes, music, even rumors. And he was actually known to smile toward God as he passed the tabernacle in chapel.

Bringing Joy to Others

Gerard sincerely tried to bring joy to others as well. He once tried to cheer up a nun after she was not re-elected prioress. Another time, when the superior inquired about his health, Gerard chided the priest not to worry so much.

Gerard believed in the power of music to move people's hearts.



*St. Gerard
The Joyful Saint*

He sent a songbook to a friend so that she could become a saint “by singing.” On another occasion a fellow who had always been bright and cheery as a young bachelor, became sullen after only a few years of marriage. Brother Gerard invited him over for dinner one evening, got him singing for a while, then sent him back to his wife, crooning all the way home. (Apparently he was not drunk, either!) The local villagers thought it was a miracle.

Too Much Joy?

Sometimes Gerard’s easygoing attitude caused others more than a little dismay. Once he had been sent to the market to buy a load of fish for the community

well suited to become a tailor, Gerard went to ask his uncle, who was a Capuchin priest, for advice about what to do with his life. Seeing how poorly Gerard was dressed, his uncle bought him a new overcoat. But when Gerard left the friary he met a man wrapped in rags and gave him the new coat. Gerard’s only recourse was to continue grinning as his uncle bawled him out in exasperation for giving away such an expensive coat.

Joyfully Imitating Christ

For a while Gerard served as an assistant schoolmaster, but because of his kindly manner the students thought he had gone mad and took advantage of him.

Supposedly they tied him to a pole and carried him down the street. Similarly, Jesus was considered to be a madman because of his long-suffering

love for humanity. Gerard’s first biographer says, “What affected [Gerard] most as he contemplated the Passion was to see the way our blessed Lord was reviled as a fool; he therefore resolved to imitate Christ’s madness so that he could share in His humiliation.” The author likens those schoolboys who harassed Gerard to the soldiers who mocked and tormented Christ during his final days.

Joy In the Eucharist

As a little boy Gerard participated in the usual games of playing priest and celebrating Mass at a makeshift altar. St. Michael was one of Gerard’s favorite saints and a statue of the archangel adorned the center of Gerard’s small shrine. As we know, one particular Sunday Gerard processed down the aisle at church to receive communion with everyone else but was refused because he had not yet received the proper instruction. The next morning at breakfast Gerard was more than happy to report that during the night St. Michael had appeared to him with a host, just as Gerard had wanted.

An earlier and commonly told story is about the statue of the Christ child that came alive and gave young Gerard a beautiful pure white loaf of bread to take home to his mother. Years later he related to his sister that he suddenly realized the boy was Jesus, not just another kid from the neighborhood. Mocking him, his sister suggested he return to their hometown and try to find Jesus again. But Gerard replied that he didn’t need to because “I can find him everywhere!”

Joy Amid Spiritual Trials

Gerard kept the community of priests and Brothers entertained with stories of his childhood piety, many of them quite frightening. Among his favorites

was a story about spending the night at prayer in church, then being greeted by a ferocious dog (whom he believed was certainly the devil) as he tried to leave in the morning. Another time a heavy wooden statue came down, as if it had been thrust in his direction while he knelt in prayer. To his listeners these tales became like ghost stories around a campfire and they all encouraged him on.

Gerard’s biographer reports that there is no way of knowing whether such incidents were coincidences or just exaggerations. But we can be sure that Gerard had close encounters with the spiritual. We do too, every time we pray or receive the sacraments. Our encounters are seldom as dramatic as the ones experienced by Gerard, yet they are real. Each time we pray, we invite God into our lives. And we can be sure that God responds.

We Spread Joy Too

So often we think that it is too difficult to become a saint. Yet Gerard was a “nobody” who was rejected by more than one religious order. Yet he persevered because God loved him so much and he was open to God’s presence and love.

We open ourselves like that to God whenever we pray. Remember, God can work in great ways through anyone. We do not have to aspire to sainthood in order for God to use us to have an impact on others—perhaps a neighbor, a co-worker, or a housemate. We

For Complications in Pregnancy

*God of love,
be near me at this difficult time.*

*Help me to know
your comforting presence
and to remember that you
never give me a difficult task
without giving me the gifts to handle it.*

*Help me to picture myself
in your loving hands,
knowing that you hold me tenderly
and that you will help me
through this difficult time.*

*Give to me
and the medical professional helping me
the wisdom to do what is best
for this child and for me.*

*Help me to trust you more each day
and to grow in your love.
Amen.*

From *Welcome! Prayers for New and Pregnant Parents*
by Kathleen Finley, Liguori Publications.

*Be joyful and do
not lose heart.
Trust in God and hope for
every grace from God.*

supper. Along the way he met a poor man selling tinderboxes and Gerard spent all his money buying the man’s entire stock. Back home, when the cook asked where the evening meal was, Gerard explained how happy his purchase had made the poor man and tried to convince the cook that all those tinderboxes might come in handy someday for something or other.

Since he did not really feel

may never know whose life we make better. Yet, in faith we can trust that God will use us in many of the same ways he used St. Gerard.

Our job is simply to pray, and then let God do the rest.

Adapted from “Gerard Majella: The Joyful Saint,” by Hamish F. G. Swanston in *Saint Gerard Majella: His Writings and Spirituality*, Noel Londoño, C.Ss.R., editor, Liguori Publications

From Gerard’s “Rules for Living”

Some people say that I make fun of the world. Oh God, what is strange about laughing at the world? The terrible thing would be if I made fun of God.