

FEAST OF ST. GERARD MAJELLA

OCTOBER 16, 2020



REDEMPTORIST CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

GERARD MAJELLA: OUR BROTHER AND COMPANION



Image of St. Gerard surrounded by his Redemptorist brothers in eternity

When the 23-year-old Gerard took part in the Redemptorist Mission in Easter Season of 1749 and met the missionaries, he somehow knew that he had found “home,” a community to whom he could belong and through whom he could make a contribution. Though Fr. Paolo Cafaro, CSsR had misgivings, he sent him on to the novitiate in Deliceto, and he entered the community on May 17, 1749, professing vows three years later, on the Feast of the Most Holy Redeemer, July 16, 1752.

During Gerard’s earthly life, many people came to recognize him as their brother. The quality of his presence, his empathy, humour, compassion and willingness to encounter others and walk with them drew others to him. He gained and maintained a reputation for being easygoing, and also for not being afraid of work. He gained a reputation for holiness, and so a number of people came to him for guidance in the spiritual life. He readily responded, revealing a remarkable gift for reading consciences and hearts. Gerard became the friend and spiritual guide of the Carmelite nuns

of Ripacandida, of the Benedictine nuns of Corato and Atella, and of the Redemptoristine sisters of Foggia and their foundress, the Venerable Maria Celeste Crostarosa. The many miracles attributed to him gained him the title ‘Wonder-worker.’

Gerard was a gifted and insightful spiritual companion to many. He was a good singer and loved music. He was known as a good cook, who could make the available food stretch to feed more, and never turned away a person in need. The skills gained in his apprenticeship in the tailor shop were often put to use in later life, making and mending his own clothing and the clothing of others. Gerard used his gifts, indeed, he poured them out in the service of others.



S. GERARDO MAJELLA



In his earthly life, Gerard Majella embodied the gift of accompaniment. He continues to accompany us today. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis calls us to develop “a heart open to the whole world.” This describes the heart of the Redemptorist brother who would become St. Gerard Majella.

Gerard continues to accompany us on our journey and, ever our brother, inspires us to pour out our gifts- as individuals and as a Redemptorist Family—as witnesses of the Redeemer in solidarity for mission to a wounded world. Gerard’s generosity of spirit is a reflection of the plenitude of God’s love, mercy and redemption.

May we, like Gerard, develop “a heart open to the whole world.”



WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT GERARD
 "He was especially fond of physical labour, so that he never wasted time. When he didn't have something to do, he tried to help others in their occupations; and when the others didn't need him he set himself to pulling down some old wall and prepared the material to rebuild it, and all this with supreme energy."

FOR YOUR REFLECTION...

- How is your heart becoming "a heart open to the whole world"?
- How do you live the generosity modelled by our brother Gerard?
- Gerard consciously sought to unify his own will with the will of God. How do you understand this as a movement in your own life?
- How do you live as sister or brother to all?

"When the bread was being baked for the community, he worked as much as four men; he took the initiative and told the other brothers: 'Let me do it, you rest' and he worked alone. Nevertheless, in the midst of manual tasks he was always recollected and united with God..." *Brother Nicola*

AND SO, WE PRAY ...

Loving God, we rejoice to celebrate Gerard Majella, early saint of the Redemptorist Community, who loved to refer to You as the "thief of hearts."
 With Gerard, we yearn to give our hearts to You ever more intensely, for You never cease pouring Yourself into our hearts.
 Grateful for Gerard's companionship, may we, in his words, "re-create ourselves in the immensity" of Your Being, and serve more faithfully the poor and wounded, as he says, who are "the living images of Jesus Christ."
 For it is in that Christ we lift our prayer to You, Source of all goodness, through the fire-light of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

WE CONCLUDE...

St. Gerard called himself a "fool for love."
May we be willing to risk all for the sake of the Gospel.
 Gerard loved the Feast of Pentecost above all others.
May the Spirit give us new energy and renewed enthusiasm.
 Gerard was a tailor who stitched fabrics together to make garments.
May we repair the torn fabric and the frayed edges of our world and make the earth whole again.
 Gerard was a skilled spiritual director and a preacher of conversion.
May we always approach the conscience of another with sensitivity and reverence.

