

From: Jerrine George

Dear Respected Ligory Acha, Sister Maryann, Teachers, Parents, and my dear friends,

A saint in heaven who intercedes for children, expectant mothers and unborn children. A saint who prays for the conversion of sinners and good confessions, A saint who had a special devotion to Mother Mary. That saint is St .Gerard Majella, and I am happy to share with you what I have learned about this saint.

Saint Gerard was born to a family of seven, in 1726, in the town of Muro Lucano, Italy. He grew up in poverty, and had great respect for the poor. Gerard had a special devotion to Mother Mary. In his childhood years, he once went to the statue of the “pretty lady” who was holding a child at church. At once the “pretty lady” and the child came to life, and the child gave Gerard a roll of bread, and they played together for some time. When Gerard told his mother about this, she thought that he was just imagining. But days after, he was still bringing home a roll of bread. So his mother followed him one day to see where he got the bread from, and she saw that it was not just any pretty lady and her child, but the Virgin Mary herself, and the child Jesus.

Unfortunately, Gerard’s father died when he was only twelve years old, which left him with his mother and and his siblings. His mother sent him to his uncle to learn tailoring, just like his father. A few years later, Gerard took a job for the local bishop of Lacedonia as a servant. Gerard always wanted to share what he had. When he started getting his income, he shared it with his mother, the poor and gave offerings for the souls in purgatory at church. Gerard fasted and prayed in the nearby cathedral.

Gerard had a strong urge to become a lay brother, and applied to join the Capuchin monastery, but due to his failing health and the fact that his mother needed him, he was rejected twice. Majella never gave up, and finally, in 1749, at the age of 23, Gerard joined the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer as a Lay brother. He took the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience.

Gerard led many people to a good confession. He had the gift of reading consciences due to his piety and extraordinary wisdom. One day, a man was coming down the road, and met Saint Gerard. He asked the man where he was going. He said, “I may be able to help you.” The man was furious at his impertinence, and tried to get away from Gerard’s grasp. Then Gerard said, “I know what is in your heart. You are in despair. You are on the point of giving your soul to the Evil One.” The man knowing that it was the truth, turned pale. Gerard said “God knows what you are thinking. He sent me to this spot to warn you.” The man was very frightened at the fact that Gerard could read his mind, and knew that

he was going to commit a crime. So the man asked for guidance, and Saint Gerard told him to go for confession.

Saint Gerard is the patron saint of motherhood. As a lay brother, Gerard visited the Pirofalo family, and left his handkerchief at their house. One of the girls called to him, and told him that he had forgotten his handkerchief. Gerard told her to keep it, and that she would need it someday. Years later, when the girl was married and dying from childbirth, she remembered the handkerchief and asked for it to be placed upon her. At once, her pain left her, and she gave birth to a healthy baby.

The health of Saint Gerard began to decline due to tuberculosis. But Saint Gerard still followed the will of God. He died on October 16, 1755, at the young age of 29. In 1893, Gerard was beautified, and on December 11, 1904, Pope Pius the 10th declared Him as Saint Gerard Majella. Many miracles happened through Saint Gerard. The National Shrine of St. Gerard is in St. Lucy's Church, Newark, and his feast day is on October 16.

I was led to choose Saint Gerard because I was touched by the ways of his life, and the many miracles that came through his intercession, including myself. I have learned from his life that God has a plan for each and every one of us and we should seek His will. There are five main qualities of St. Gerard I would like to follow in my life. They are readiness to follow God's will, a sharing and compassionate nature, respect for the poor and less fortunate, willingness to pray for others, and a deep devotion to Mother Mary. So let us follow St. Gerard's good example and pray to God that we may do His will always.

Thank you.