



Novena in Honor of St. Gerard Majella

Imprimi Potest:
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The Redemptorists

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Introduction

The Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Fr. Rogério Gomes, C.Ss.R., declared April 26, 2025 to April 26, 2026 the Jubilee Year of the Tercentenary of the birth of St. Gerard Majella. He writes:

We are about to celebrate the tercentenary of the birth of St. Gerard Majella, a Redemptorist missionary and religious brother, born in Muro Lucano (Potenza) on 6 April 1726 into a family of meagre means. A tailor by trade, he tried to enter the Capuchin order, but was not accepted. However, his determination to achieve sainthood led him to run away from home in search of his vocation. Despite initial rejections, he found a welcome among the Redemptorist missionaries, where he was professed as a brother and devoted his life to manual labour in the community. Throughout his life, he endured calumnies with meekness and patience. In the Sele valley, he carried out an intense apostolic work in isolated villages, distinguishing himself by his charity and dedication. He had a special gift for spiritual accompaniment, especially with the nuns who came to him for advice. His life was distinguished by simplicity, deep prayer and charity.

-Fr. Rogério Gomes, C.Ss.R, Rome, 26 April 2025

In addition to honoring St. Gerard's life and legacy, the Redemptorists invite you to join us in celebrating and praying for the vocation of the Redemptorist Brother. This brief Novena in honor of St. Gerard Majella features reflections written by Redemptorist Brothers of North America. Each offers a unique perspective—some devotional, some hagiographical, and others deeply personal—showcasing the richness and variety of devotion to St. Gerard. We give thanks for Redemptorist Brothers, especially their witness and faithful discipleship of the Redeemer.

How to Pray this Novena

A novena is an ancient form of Christian prayer that expresses our steadfast trust in the power of prayer. A true sign of faith and an expression of love, a novena, or nine occasions of prayer, bears testimony to our human perseverance—a mere fraction of the infinite patience that God has for us! In the creation story in Genesis 1, God is pleased to see the seven-day handiwork of creation through to completion; likewise, our perseverance to see a novena through to its completion is cause for rejoicing in union with the Lord, for we are made in that same image of God who took delight in the accomplishment of creation and who delights in our prayerful persistence. “Pray, pray. Never cease to pray,” wrote Saint Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorist Congregation...

This devotion is nothing more than an expression of love to our loving Redeemer. As such, the meditations present the example of St. Gerard Majella to inspire us to be as true as he was to the Gospel of Christ.

Begin each prayer occasion during the novena with the invocations and opening prayer **(pages 3 & 4)**. After each meditation for the day **(pages 5 to 17)** comes the closing prayers **(pages 18 to 20)**.

Based upon introduction from Novena in Honor of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Byron Miller, C.Ss.R. © 2001.

Invocations

Leader (L): In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All (A): Amen.

L. Lord, have mercy on us!

A. Christ, have mercy on us!

L. Lord, have mercy on us!

L. Christ, hear us!

A. Christ, graciously hear us!

L. Blessed Francis

A. pray for us.

L. God our Father, Creator of all,

A. Have mercy on us.

L. Jesus our Redeemer,

A. Friend of the poor,

All: Have mercy on us.

L. Holy Spirit, Gift of love and unity,

A. Have mercy on us.

L. Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help,

A. Pray for us.

L. Saint Alphonsus, Doctor of Prayer,

A. Pray for us.

L. Saint Clement Hofbauer, preacher of the abandoned,
A. Pray for us.

L. Saint John Neumann, shepherd of immigrants,
A. Pray for us.

L. Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, joyful missionary,
A. Pray for us.

L. Blessed Peter Donders, servant of the outcast,
A. Pray for us.

L. Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli, defender of the poor,
A. Pray for us.

L. Blessed Methodius Dominic Trčka, martyr of the faith,
A. Pray for us.

L. Blessed Gaspar Stanggassinger, formator of youth,
A. Pray for us.

L. Redemptorist Martyrs of Cuenca, Spain, Redemptorist Ukranian Martyrs,
and all Redemptorist Martyrs,
A: Pray for us.

L. Saint Gerard Majella, humble brother and missionary of hope,
A. Pray for us.

L. Saint Gerard, faithful son of Mary,
A. Pray for us.

L. Saint Gerard, model of charity and patience,
A. Pray for us.

L. Saint Gerard, companion of the poor and protector of families,
A. Pray for us.

L. Saint Gerard, witness of the Redeemer's love,
A. Pray for us.

Daily Prayers

Day One: Brother for the Poor

Scripture Verse - Luke 4:16-19

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom* into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Dan Hall, C.Ss.R.

St Gerard Majella, filled with the Holy Spirit, you tended to people experiencing poverty in mind, body, and Spirit. You knew Jesus was the fulfillment of our hopes and desires. You know the Holy Spirit brings us grace, truth, life, and freedom. Fill me with the joy of the Gospel and inflame our hearts with the love and zeal that he had for you.

St Gerard Majella, pray for us.

Day Two: Simplicity & Humility

Scripture Verse - Romans 12:9-13, 15, 17-18

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Kenneth Stigner, C.Ss.R.

Whenever we see images of St. Gerard, they usually seem to highlight his prayerfulness. Yet these are more than just pious images; they also reflect the virtue of humility that shone through his life and serves as an example for us to follow. Though he was noted as a miracle worker, he was not one to draw attention to himself or show off his accomplishments. Rather, with a sense of simplicity, he reflected many of the qualities of Christ himself, coming to serve rather than to be served. He lived the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans, to “love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor” and to “rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” Gerard also took to heart the charism of the Redemptorists to preach to the most abandoned, especially the poor.

There are some who may question St. Gerard’s humility as going too far, as in the case when being wrongfully accused of fathering a child. Yes, he could have pleaded his case strongly, but he chose to remain silent. Yet

the humility he demonstrated during these trying times, including being withheld communion by St. Alphonsus himself, showed how he aligned himself closely with Christ crucified, who, despite the shame of the cross, underwent unbearable suffering. In addition, the bodily suffering that he endured in his sickly life, cut so short at the age of 29 due to tuberculosis, enabled him to relate to the crucified Christ. It was in this way that St. Gerard, in his own time of trials, grew in his way of humility.

It was likely St. Gerard's great love for the poor that he served so faithfully that drew him to live a life of prayerful simplicity. In his life, Gerard always stood on the side of those in need and was quick to aid those who were ignored by most others. For us today as well, we can take St. Gerard as our model of how to live a life of humility and simplicity. It is said that humility is not about thinking less of yourself, but rather thinking of yourself less. This certainly gets to the core of what Gerard was all about and serves as an example for you and me in our day. How can we live more simply, more humbly? If we follow the example of our Lord and the life of our Redemptorist Brother St. Gerard, we're sure to find our answer.

St Gerard Majella, pray for us.

Day Three: Brother of Prayer

Scripture Verse - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Larry Lujan, C.Ss.R.

To say Gerard was pious or prayerful is an understatement. Gerard did not just dedicate moments of his day to prayer but learned to make his entire life a prayer. Prayer for Gerard was not something static. It changed him and his relationship with others. His biographers often contrast him with other members of the early Redemptorist community. It was said that Domenico Blassucci “never looked his mother in the face and much less his six sisters or other women” to remain chaste. Gerard, who was the same age as Domenico, from the same region and social class, had resolved, “As often as I see a woman I will honor the Virgin with a Hail Mary.” This was not a prayer to avoid temptation, but rather to praise God through Mary. He was not distracted by the creation but only wanted to praise the Creator.

Gerard was not educated like Alphonsus. Yet when Alphonsus was publishing *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*, Gerard was “passing hours in church in front of the tabernacle.” While Alphonsus was editing *The Glories of Mary*, Gerard wrote, “I choose the Holy Spirit as my only consoler and protector in all things... and you, my only joy, Immaculate Virgin Mary.” By the time *Conformity to the Will of God* was published, Gerard’s life was coming to an end in a room where “here the will of God is done, as he wishes and as long as he wishes.”

What brings him to this saintly path? His ability to be aware of God's presence and to celebrate it. In his prayer and mortifications, in his obedience to superiors, Gerard chose to be as "Christ-like" as he could, even enduring mockery. But this only made his prayer deeper, which in turn made his outward charity even more pronounced and miraculous.

For Gerard, prayer was not an end unto itself. Rather, it was an aid to free oneself from distraction and to concentrate only on loving God. Only when we realize God is present to us today, as we are, not who we think we should be, can we begin to pray. And in loving God, we are moved to the other – to share that love and to demonstrate love in simple gestures of kindness.

In his Rules for living, he wrote: "Brother Gerard, resolve to give yourself completely to God. From now on, be more sensible and realize that you will not become a saint just by being in continuous prayer and contemplation. The best prayer is to be as God wishes you. To break before the divine will, that is in continuous works for God. This is what God wants from you. Do not let yourself be subjected to your pleasures or those of the world. It is enough, in what is done, to hold God forever present and to be always in God. Truly, everything, if it is done for God alone, everything is prayer."

St Gerard Majella, pray for us.

Day Four: Patient amid Trials

Scripture Verse - Matthew 5:10-12

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Dan Hall, C.Ss.R.

St. Gerard Majella, you faced many challenges during your twenty-nine years on earth. Yet, you remained faithful through all the trials you endured, from illness to being mistreated as an apprentice and as a servant to a harsh bishop, and from being wrongfully accused of a sin of impurity. Give me the strength to accept my trials with patience and understanding, knowing that God only has love for us.

St Gerard Majella, pray for us.

Day Five: Joyful Missionary

Scripture Verse - Luke 10:1-5, 8-9

After this the Lord appointed seventy[-two] others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Dan Hall, C.Ss.R.

For six years as a Redemptorist brother, St. Gerard lived a life of joyful and humble service, working in various capacities, including sacristan, gardener, tailor, porter, cook, and carpenter. St Gerard is known as a missionary of hope, bringing sinners back to the sacraments. St Gerard, you are known as a "joyful missionary" for your cheerful and obedient service despite a life filled with suffering and trials. In your life of humble dedication, and through miracles, your deep faith continues to inspire people, particularly those who are expectant mothers.

St Gerard Majella, pray for us.

Day Six: “I Wish to Become a Saint”

Scripture Verse - Philippians 3:12-14

It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ [Jesus]. Brothers, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus.

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Eumir Bautista, C.Ss.R.

Saint Gerard had a clear vision of God’s plan for his life. The call to holiness was evident even to the young Gerard. As a child, Gerard experienced poverty and saw the poor around him. As a result, a compassionate heart blossomed in Gerard. His compassion opened up God’s grace, allowing him to be a conduit of mercy for people to receive divine intervention, big and small.

Gerard answered the call to holiness as a dutiful son. When his father passed away at the age of 12, he was sent to live with his uncle to learn to become a tailor to support his family. Eventually, he took on a role as a servant with the local Bishop of Lacedonia. Gerard’s compassionate heart was revealed even more as he generously divided his earnings between his family and the poor, leaving little for himself.

Devoting himself to fasting and prayer, the call to a life of holiness was

strong in Gerard. In his early 20s, he sought to enter religious life in a Capuchin monastery at Muro but was turned down twice because his health was not well enough for such a strenuous life. However, he continued to listen to God's call and was determined to live a life of holiness as a religious.

Once again, in 1749, at the age of 23, he sought to enter religious life, this time with the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. The Redemptorists saw Gerard's potential, and in just three years, he professed as a Redemptorist.

As a Redemptorist Brother, he worked as a gardener and a porter, applied his trade as a tailor, and assisted in the infirmary. During this time, Brother Gerard became known as a "wonder-worker" because of the many miraculous events through his prayers. Through Gerard's compassionate heart, the mercy of God flowed out and touched people's lives. Brother Gerard died of tuberculosis on October 16, 1755, at the age of twenty-nine. He kept a small note tacked to his door on which was written "The Will of God is done here, as God wills it, and as long as God wills it." Pope Pius X canonized Brother Gerard on December 11, 1904

Saint Gerard's perseverance and compassionate heart are perfect models for a Christian life in our contemporary times. As a Redemptorist Brother, I look at these virtues as inspiration to live out my religious life in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. Through the life and examples of Brother Saint Gerard, may we persevere in our call to holiness.

St Gerard Majella, pray for us.

Day Seven: Fraternity in Community

Scripture Verse - Acts 4:32-34a

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them.

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Bruce Davidson, C.Ss.R.

The early Christian community had to take these words from the Acts of the Apostles to heart. They had to be freely willing to share all they possessed with each other, support those who were in need, and always live in a state of selflessness and solidarity.

St. Gerard Majella willingly answered the summons to proclaim the Gospel through word and deed, to live faithfully in community. His example of selfless living is still the model we are encouraged to follow. I was privileged to witness St. Gerard's missionary zeal during a trip to Haiti to serve as a spiritual director to a women's religious community. I was privileged to stay at St. Gerard Majella Parish, a Redemptorist community in Port-au-Prince. My trip occurred following the January 2010 earthquake. The destruction of Port-au-Prince and the surrounding communities was staggering, and the grief was wrenching. Overshadowing the tragedy was a spirit of generosity, a fruit of hope, and a generosity, manifested in the stories of the early Christian Church, which St. Luke describes in Acts of the Apostles.

During that visit, each morning, several hundred people assembled in the temporary shelter, which doubled as St. Gerard Church. There they would gather to pray in unity together. Their a cappella singing spilled out into the neighborhood, the congregants harmonizing, and St. Gerard parishioners' songs blended with the singing of nearby churches. Their joy was apparent in their singing and the expression on their faces. The desire to be one was taken to the streets and the markets where men and women barter and pay for daily portions of rice, beans, and fruit. One shopper typically can purchase barely enough food for the household; however, with them gathered together, just as in the early Church, what was barely sufficient became abundant. This should call to mind the multiplication of loaves and fish in Matthew 14:14-21. It was humbling to witness these events.

Who would you say is possibly the progeny of this community of the Acts of the Apostles? I believe that it is St. Gerard. We can look to St. Gerard, who shared his enthusiasm for the Gospel, his compassion and generosity, his unrestrained joy, and his hope that the people he served would be united together, and live as a community founded in hope.

St. Gerard Majella, pray for us!

Day Eight: The Mother's Saint

Scripture Verse - Psalm 139:13-14

You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.
I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works!
My very self you know.

Daily Reflection

St. Gerard Majella, a Redemptorist brother, is recognized by countless people around the world as “The Mothers’ Saint.” Since his death in 1755, extraordinary favors have been granted to mothers who have turned to him in prayer. His loving presence continues to be felt in hearts, homes, and hospitals around the globe. Wherever there is a mother in need, a baby in danger, a sick child, or a family in distress, prayers rise up to St. Gerard. If one visits the Shrine of St. Gerard in Materdomini, Italy, there is a room where thousands of photographs of babies and toddlers cover the walls and even the ceiling. Each image represents a story of hope and gratitude—parents who attribute their child’s life to St. Gerard’s intercession. Over the years, many Redemptorists have shared how their parents dedicated them to St. Gerard, trusting in his powerful prayers.

It is always difficult, if not impossible, to understand the pain of complicated pregnancies or the sorrow of losing a child too soon. Yet even in these moments of suffering, we believe that St. Gerard shares in every mother’s grief and lovingly accompanies each child with tender care, uniting them to the merciful heart of Christ.

St Gerard Majella, pray for us.

Day Nine: Witness of Hope

Scripture Verse - Romans 15:7, 13

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit.

Daily Reflection - by Bro. Bruce Davidson, C.Ss.R.

It was during the latter part of Spring 2019 that I received a telephone call asking me to assume a ministerial role as a spiritual director at Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Redemptorist Retreat Center, located in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. I struggle to enthusiastically embrace change, especially when the change requires packing boxes with books and personal possessions and folding and packing clothing to be shipped to a new home.

I knew I would live with fellow Redemptorists, but I wondered about my new assignment. Will I be accepted by the laity whom I will serve? All the many practical questions of life rose up within me. I needed to find new doctors, get a new driver's license, navigate a new city, and settle into a new routine. My "hope" was that I would adapt easily to my new home. It wasn't long before I learned that the Holy Spirit sent me to where I needed to be: a new place, where not only was I being called to serve and care for others, but I myself was being cared for.

St. Gerard profoundly experienced the power of the Holy Spirit as he listened to and counseled others. Think of St. Gerard, who came from humble circumstances. These circumstances seemed to bolster his conviction and hope. They stoked the fire in his heart to perform God's will

with love and zeal, despite whatever challenges came his way.

St. Gerard looked at every circumstance with hope. His own frail health did not prevent him from wanting to live the arduous life of a missionary. The poverty-stricken people he served did not cause him to stop giving, but made him give all the more. St. Gerard never let circumstance or challenge extinguish his hope.

Trust that St. Gerard will inspire and encourage us through his intercession.

St. Gerard Majella, pray for us!

Closing Prayers

L. Let us pray the Jubilee prayer together:

A. Eternal Father, we praise and thank you for the life of Saint Gerard Majella, born 300 years ago to be a light and a sign of hope in the Church and in the world.

Jesus, our Redeemer, we desire to follow you, inspired by the example of Saint Gerard Majella, embracing the cross of each day with love and humility in service to the most abandoned, especially the poor.

Holy Spirit, enlighten our minds and hearts to discern and fulfill the will of God with joy. Teach us to be brothers and sisters, and, with Saint Gerard, to promote fraternity and peace.

Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, you who dwell in the communion of saints with Saint Gerard, pray for the Redemptorist missionaries, that they may persevere in their vocation and mission. Bless families and awaken in the hearts of young people the desire to follow Jesus in consecrated religious life.

Amen.

L. Together we pray:

A. Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

A. Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

A. Glory be to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning
is now, and ever shall be
world without end.
Amen.

L. Saint Gerard, Brother and Missionary of Hope,

A. Pray for us, that we may follow Christ faithfully, love the poor tenderly, and serve the Church with humility, until we join you in the communion of saints.

Closing Blessing

L. May almighty God bless you through the intercession of St. Gerard Majella: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

A. Amen.



S. GERARDO MAIELLA