

Meditative Novena to Saint Gerard Majella

A Redemptorist Pastoral Publication



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What Is a Novena?

Traditionally, a novena is a prayer or set of prayers repeated for nine consecutive days. However, it could just as well be accomplished in nine consecutive hours of one day, or spread out to include one particular day each week over the course of nine consecutive weeks. Thus, we see that those who participate in the Eucharist on the first Friday of each month make a “novena of first Fridays.”

No fixed rules need to be set down for making a novena, except to persevere in the prayer. So a novena is merely a good way to help us form the habit of regular prayer.

Novenas in honor of various saints are moments of shared friendship with the court of heaven. Through our friendship with a particular saint we are assisted to live our lives steeped in deep love for God and neighbor. Like the saints, we strive to be a light in the world, bringing the compassion and love of God to all we meet in our journey of life. Novenas are good ways to relate to a favorite saint in the midst of our daily lives. Through these prayers and devotions, we bring the saints into our lives and share with them our needs and worries. We ask the saints to join their prayers with ours, and as we do our friendship with them and with God grows.

Who Is Saint Gerard Majella?

Saint Gerard Majella lived in Italy in the early eighteenth century (1726-1755). His mother was left in poverty to raise him and his two younger sisters after his father died when Gerard was very young.

Gerard was sickly all throughout his short life. Even so, he desired to become a religious Brother. Several communities turned him away because of his weak condition. But he persisted after hearing Redemptorist missionaries preach in the local parish church. They were hesitant, as well, but finally sent him to the monastery believing he would be merely, “a useless lay Brother.”

Yet in spite of his infirmities, Gerard became a powerful missionary among the people of the region. He is said to have been a miracle-worker, bringing about cures, reading the hearts of sinners, levitating in the presence of the Eucharist, and on and on.

In the same vein, it is said that he once visited a woman experiencing a difficult pregnancy. Because of his intercession with God, she safely delivered a healthy baby. Today Saint Gerard is known as the patron saint of pregnant mothers. Many couples also pray to him for help in conceiving a child. More and more, he is becoming known as a patron in the crusade for protection of the unborn, as well.

Gerard Majella lived a simple life and was very close to God. From heaven he continues to help all kinds of people with all kinds of needs, just as when he was alive on earth.

How to Use This Pamphlet

When making this novena privately, it is suggested that if possible you find a place where you can be comfortable and quiet, away from distractions. Begin by closing your eyes and becoming aware of God's presence with you in that place at that moment. Before beginning the prayers below, recall to mind what it is you want to ask of Saint Gerard this day.

Opening Prayer

As an opening to your novena each day, choose the prayer from those below that best fits your needs and life situation.

To Conceive and Bear a Child

O good Saint Gerard, powerful intercessor before the throne of God, wonder-worker of our day, I call upon you and seek your help. While on earth, you always fulfilled God's designs; help me too, always to do God's