

Saint Gerard Majella

1726-1755

Saint Gerard was born in the village of Muro Lucano, in the province of Potenza, in the region of Basilicata, Italy in 1726 to a poor family. He tried in vain to enter the Order of the Capuchins, until he met the Redemptorist Fathers who accepted him into their Order.

In 1752 he made his solemn vows into the hands of Saint Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori, the founder of the congregation. This most celebrated event of his life took place in 1754: unjustly accused by Neria Caggiano to be the father of her expectant baby, he did not reply and remained in silence for one month, patiently submitting to the penalties of his superiors; finally Neria Caggiano repented and confessed to having lied, and exonerated Gerard Majella, who today is considered the patron saint of

prematurely that it was about Jesus. He also went himself one morning, but the priest saw that he was little and sent him back to sit down. At eight years old, in those days, a person was too young for the Eucharist, but Gerard was already well on his way to being acquainted with his Lord.

The tears spilled in church continued to soak the threadbare bed in his poor little room. The priest had told him no, but Jesus had replied yes to his little friend. At night he sent him the Archangel Michael to offer him the



pregnant women and of babies. He died of consumption in the Redemptorist Monastery of Caposele at the age of 29 years old. From when he was very young, extraordinary mystical leanings were revealed in him.

He had a difficult childhood. Poverty was the only thing that was never missing in his home, and when necessary things were lacking he would go and take refuge in the Chapel of the Virgin in Capodigiano. "The Son of that beautiful Lady" thought about Gerard, and he would often leave his mother's side to offer to his little friend a bun of white bread. This matter of the white bread was repeated many times, "for a long time." Only much later, as a religious, Gerard told his sister Brigit: "Now I know that the young boy who gave me that bread was the same Jesus."

The gift of the white bread caused him to discover another bread, also white, although much smaller. He would notice it in church, during Mass, when the faithful would approach the communion rail. Here he had understood

consecrated Bread. The following morning, happy and triumphant, he candidly acknowledged: "Yesterday the priest refused me Holy Communion, last night Saint Michael the Archangel brought it to me." Even this incident, seemingly a fantasy, will come to be confirmed by Gerard himself twenty years later.

Numerous also were the occasions in which he provoked the apparition of the devil in order to tear away souls from sin. We are at Deliceto. A gentleman, who by his appearance seems to be nothing but full of respect and devotion, but in his heart he concealed passions and sins, came to be near Gerard who unmasked his false demeanor. Upon hearing the strenuous defense of his conduct, the Saint opposed him with an endless list of his misdeeds, until the point of allowing him to see the demon ready to drag him away to hell. To another who hid his sins in the confessional the same frightening vision occurred. He was able to read consciences, was able to foresee dangers, and intervened with the power of the Holy Spirit.