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J.M.J.

## THE SECOND PRAYER TO MARY

— Saint Anselm of Canterbury



*The setting for this prayer is a law court. Christ is presiding. The sinner knows his guilt and the justice of the judge. He turns to the Mother of Christ for mercy.*

*Anselm's idea of atonement does not separate Christ and Mary, or justice and mercy. The veritable source of mercy is Jesus Christ. Mary has by grace what is due to her son by nature. All she has, she has only from Him. She is not the one to overturn justice.*

Virgin venerated throughout the world, Mother dear to the human race, Woman, marvel of the angels, Mary, most holy.

By your blessed virginity you have made all integrity sacred, and by your glorious child-bearing you have brought salvation to all fruitfulness.

Great Lady, to you the joyous company of the saints gives thanks; to you the fearful crowd of the accused flee; and to you, Lady of might and mercy, I flee, a sinner every way, beyond measure distressed.

Lady, it seems to me as if I were already before the all-powerful justice of the stern judge facing the intolerable vehemence of His wrath, while hanging over me is the enormity of my

sins, and the huge torments they deserve.

Most gentle Lady, whose intercession should I implore when I am troubled with horror, and shake with fear, but hers, whose womb embraced the reconciliation of the world?

Whence should I most surely hope for help quickly in need, but from her whence I know came the world's propitiation?

Who can more easily gain pardon for the accused by her intercession, than she who gave milk to Him who justly punishes or mercifully pardons all and each one?

[...] Good Lord and good Lady, dear Son and dear mother by this truth which is the only hope of sinners, that you will be her Son and you will be His mother to save this sinner.

Thus, thus let this sinner be absolved and cared for, healed and saved.

In this he shows himself to be your sinner, as indeed he is, for he knows you to be both son and mother for the salvation of sinners. Indeed, I am the sinner who belongs to you both.

When I have sinned against the son,  
I have alienated the mother,  
nor can I offend the mother without  
hurting the son.

What will you do, then, sinner?

Where will you flee?

Who can reconcile me to the Son if the  
mother is my enemy,

or who will make my peace with the  
mother

if I have angered the Son?

Surely if I have offended you both  
equally

you will both also be merciful?

So the accused flees from the just God  
to the good mother of the merciful  
God.

The accused finds refuge from the  
mother he has offended

in the good Son of the kind mother.

The accused is carried from one to the  
other and throws himself between  
the good Son and the good mother.

Dear Lord, spare the servant of your  
mother;

dear Lady, spare the servant of your  
Son.

Good Son, make your servant's peace  
with your mother;

good mother, reconcile your Son to  
your servant.

When I throw myself between two  
of such unbounded goodness  
I shall not fall under the severity of  
their power.

Good son, good mother,

do not let me confess this truth about  
you in vain, lest I blush for hoping in  
your goodness.

I love the truth I confess about you,  
and I beg for that goodness which I  
hope for from you.

Tell me, judge of the world,  
whom you will spare, tell me,  
reconciler of the world, whom you will  
reconcile, if you, Lord, condemn, and  
you, Lady, turn away your goodness  
and love from this little man  
who confesses his sin with sorrow?  
Saviour of each one, tell me whom you  
will save, mother of salvation, tell me  
for whom you will pray, if it is by your  
command, Lord, and with your  
consent, Lady, that torments vex the  
sinner who blames himself and prays  
to you, that hell absorbs the prisoner  
who accuses himself and entreats you,  
that Tartarus devours the poor man  
who despairs of himself and hopes in  
you.

God, who was made the Son of a  
woman out of mercy; woman, who

was made mother of God out of mercy;  
have mercy upon this wretch,  
you forgiving, you interceding,  
or show the unhappy man to whom he  
may flee for safety  
and point out in whose power he may  
more certainly confide.

If it is—or rather because it is—  
that my sin is so great and my faith so  
small, so cool my love, so feeble my  
prayer, so imperfect my satisfaction,  
that I deserve neither the forgiveness  
of sins nor the grace of salvation,  
for this very reason I ask that in  
whatever way you see that my merits  
are not sufficient for me,  
there in your mercy you will not be  
found wanting.

So I ask you to hear me  
by your own merits rather than mine,  
so that by the goodness you pour forth  
and the power in which you abound,  
I may escape the sorrows of damnation  
which I deserve and enter into the joy  
of the blessed to praise you, God,  
who are worthy to be praised and  
exalted for ever. Amen.

Source: *Johann Roten S.M.*, "Anselm of  
Canterbury: The Marian Spirituality of  
Saint Anselm" [https://udayton.edu/imri/  
mary/a/anselm-of-canterbury.php](https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/a/anselm-of-canterbury.php)