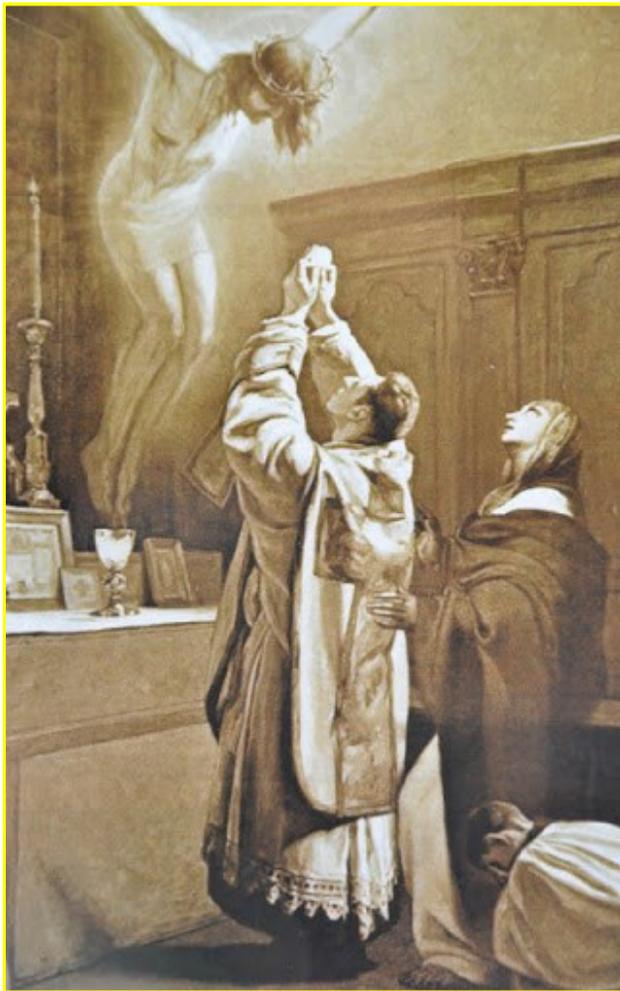


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J.M.J.

PRAYER FOR A PRIEST BEFORE OFFERING HOLY MASS



O THOU supreme and adorable Trinity, I, the greatest of sinners, whom Thou hast nevertheless called by Thy grace to the office of the priesthood, propose and intend to touch and handle these most sacred Mysteries and to offer to Thee the unbloody sacrifice.

Wherefore, in union with that infinite love wherewith Thou hast so loved the world that Thou didst give Thine only-begotten Son; in union with that boundless charity wherewith the same Thine only-begotten Son took to himself our nature, and instituted and commanded us to offer this sacrifice, and offered himself for us on the altar of the cross, and doth still unceasingly offer himself in the heavens by showing for us His sacred scars and wounds, our ever-loving, ever-faithful advocate with Thee; in union with all the love, reverence, and devotion wherewith any of Thy priests hath ever offered it, I will draw near to Thy altar and offer this tremendous sacrifice, together with all which are now being offered to Thee all over the world.

Wherefore, O most holy Father, I lay upon Thine altar and offer to Thee all the merits, virtues, and good works which Thy only-begotten Son wrought during His whole life on earth, and especially His most holy Passion, cross, and death, His Humanity and His Divinity; and together with these I offer Thee all the merits of the

blessed Mary His Mother, and of all the saints, all the wounds and the throes of Thy martyrs, all the mortifications and austerities of confessors, all the chaste love of virgins, all the tribulations and groanings of the afflicted, all the misery and the needs of the poor, and all the whole treasure of our holy Mother the Church. And to these I desire and intend to add whatever good words, or deeds, or thoughts I, or any of those with whom I am especially connected, have thought or said or done for Thy glory, and all the sorrow and adversity we have ever endured for Thy sake. Would that all our works were such as we might presume to offer and set forth before Thee; but do Thou condescend to receive them, even such as they are.

And all these good works and sufferings, thus united with this sacrifice, I offer Thee, O most holy Father, through Thine only-begotten Son, in the power of the Holy Ghost, in my own name, and in that of all my especial friends and of all Thy holy Church, as our part of that supreme worship, adoration, and glory, which are due to Thee the supreme Lord of all: in true and adequate thanksgiving for all the riches of Thine inexhaustible goodness, which Thou hast bestowed on the Sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints of heaven, and on all

Thy creatures throughout this Thy world, and on me and my especial friends in our bodies and in our souls: in expiation and reparation of every insult and wrong ever done to Thee by all sinners, of whom I am chief and worst: and finally, for that supreme good pleasure, that joy and delight, which Thou dost ever receive from this most acceptable oblation.

Next, I offer it to Thee for the especial and signal increase of joy and glory to the sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in memory and veneration of His most holy Incarnation, Nativity, Life, Passion, and Death, in memory and honour of all His sighs, His tears, His wounds, His sorrows, and of each drop of His most precious Blood poured out for us; and for the special increase of bliss to the ever-blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, especially N.

Thirdly, I offer it to Thee for our holy Mother the Church, and for all her members and children; beseeching Thee through the infinite merits of this sacrifice that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to keep and defend it, to extend it, and make it perfect in every good work; in satisfaction, also, and in expiation of all the sins of all the whole world, and especially of those which I, alas, or any of my especial friends have ever committed against Thee.

Lastly, I offer it to Thee with all the energy of my whole being for myself,

most unworthy of Thy servants, and for my parents, brothers, sisters, relations, and benefactors; for all who are sick or afflicted, or in any need or tribulation, and for all for whom Thy beloved Son immolated himself, and still longs to immolate himself yet again; and for all who are detained in purgatory, especially N., for whom Thou knowest I am especially bound to pray.

Behold, O my Lord, since Thou hast willed me to perform the office of a priest, I now discharge my ministry and office with Thee for all these; these all wait for the lifting up of my weak hands, for the oblation of this availing sacrifice. For all these I will draw near now to Thine altar, bearing my own miseries and iniquities and the iniquities and miseries of all these; and I will now offer them to Thee in the spirit of humility and with a contrite heart, and spread them all forth before Thy face, that by the virtue of this sacrifice all our sins may be blotted out and all our miseries relieved.

But, O Lord, how shall I intercede for the sins of others, who am not secure by reason of my own? How shall I implore Thy mercy for others, who have rendered myself unworthy of the least grace or mercy at Thy hands, by the reckless waste I have made of ray whole life and by my wretched conduct towards Thee? Wherefore in the bitterness of Thy Passion

I pour out my complaint before Thee, bemoaning and bewailing every thing whereby I have hindered the action of Thy grace and quenched Thy Spirit within me, and offended Thee by my multiplied sins and negligences. For all these let the groanings of my heart come up before Thee, and receive the wailing cry of repentance which I address towards Thee because of my wretchedness and my wickednesses. O most compassionate Jesus, blot out all my sins; I do most heartily grieve for them; blot them all out with that love wherewith Thou hast washed away the sins of the whole world.

Bedew my dry and parched soul with the tears Thou didst shed, anoint it with the myrrh of the sorrow Thou didst endure, cleanse it with Thy most precious Blood which Thou didst shed for me with such lavish prodigality. Put forth Thy hand from above, strengthen me now, and render me worthy to celebrate aright this adorable sacrifice. May the Holy Ghost come upon me, and the power of the Most High overshadow me, that I may be enabled to stand before Thy dread altar, without being swept from Thy presence, and that I may touch and handle, and offer and immolate, the spotless Lamb of God with a pure heart and undented hands, to Thine everlasting glory and to the salvation of all the whole world. Amen.