

THE UNIVERSAL LIVING ROSARY ASSOCIATION

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The Beautiful Hands Of A Priest

We need them in life's early morning,
we need them again at its close;
We feel their warm clasp of true friendship,
we seek them when tasting life's woes.
At the Altar each day we behold them,
and the hands of a king on his throne
Are not equal to them in their greatness,
their dignity stands all alone;
And when we are tempted and wander
to pathways of shame and of sin,
It's the hand of a priest that will absolve us
not once, but again and again;
And when we are taking life's partner,
other hands may prepare us a feast,
But the hand that will bless and unite us
is the beautiful hand of a priest.
God bless them and keep them all holy
for the Host which their fingers caress;
When can a poor sinner do better
than to ask him to guide thee and bless?
When the hour of death comes upon us
may our courage and strength be increased.
By seeing raised over us in blessing
the beautiful hands of a priest!



Who Is The Priest?

At the very center of the crowd is a person often not recognized, (St. Matthew 3:11 - *but He whose sandals I am not worthy to bear* - St. John the Baptist to the people of Israel). This reproach of Christians is as valid today as it was in the time of Christ for so many lack the most basic respect for the priesthood. How many people recognize his mission, see his sufferings and respect the dignity of his office? They are unmindful

of what Christ has told us: *"He who hears you, hears Me, and he who persecutes you persecutes Me."*

The priest is a most essential person and deeply needed by all humanity. Only he can truly echo the words of Our Blessed Lord, *"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me."* (St. John 14:6)

We must work diligently to properly prize this person who is with us from our birth to our death, in our moments of joy and our moments of suffering; all the key moments of our lives, he is there. God has given him the keys of this earth and, most importantly, the keys of Heaven. The priest is a servant of God, a victim soul. He sacrifices himself for the salvation of souls. **Every priest is another Christ!**

The priesthood was instituted in Jerusalem on Maundy Thursday night, when Christ gave His Apostles the Holy Eucharist which would be offered until the end of time. The priesthood continues through His words at each Holy Mass: *"Do this in commemoration of Me"*. Through this pronouncement, He confirmed the priesthood on His Apostles and gave them the power to forgive sins. *"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."* (St. John 20:23)

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus had given them the power to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to forgive sins, to baptize and to preach justice to all humanity. On the day of His Ascension into Heaven, the Apostles awaited the signal from God to begin their mission upon earth.

THE HOLY PRIESTHOOD

The priest has been given the power to continue the work of our Redemption which is confirmed by the Son of God. He has the special charism of teaching, just as Christ was the infallible Teacher of the truths of our Catholic Faith, which give light to every soul born into this world. He has the charge to direct us to Heaven. "In the power of his office of duty", the priest feeds souls with the sacred nourishment of supernatural grace given in the Holy Eucharist. The priest, today, continues the mission and office of the first Apostles. The priests and bishops united together form the Hierarchy of the Church. The Holy Father is the Vicar of Christ upon earth. St. Peter was the first Pope appointed by Christ Himself. His power to rule extends over all bishops, priests, lay apostles and members of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Bishops are appointed by the Pope and they, in turn, choose the parish priests in their diocese. The bishop is the administrator of the parishes in his diocese.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders transforms the candidate for priesthood into a sacred person, imprinting upon his soul a sacred character which can never be cancelled. He will be a priest forever! If a priest abandons his cassock because he chooses another vocation, the power of the Church remains with him (Canon 882) to absolve from sin those in the agony of death. This he can do only in the absence of another priest being present. Possessing this special charism, the priest is unlike other people. Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, he is confirmed a servant of God, who brings Christ to humanity and directs us to Heaven. The first duty of a priest is entirely spiritual - that souls may have eternal life. His work is not for a day, a week or a year; it is taken on for an entire lifetime until his dying breath. A priest never has a day off. His duties are great and manifold. Every priest is a victim soul with Christ; his freedom and his life are sacrificed in union with Christ Crucified for the salvation of souls. We call him, **'Father'**, for truly he is.



WHO IS THE CATHOLIC PRIEST?

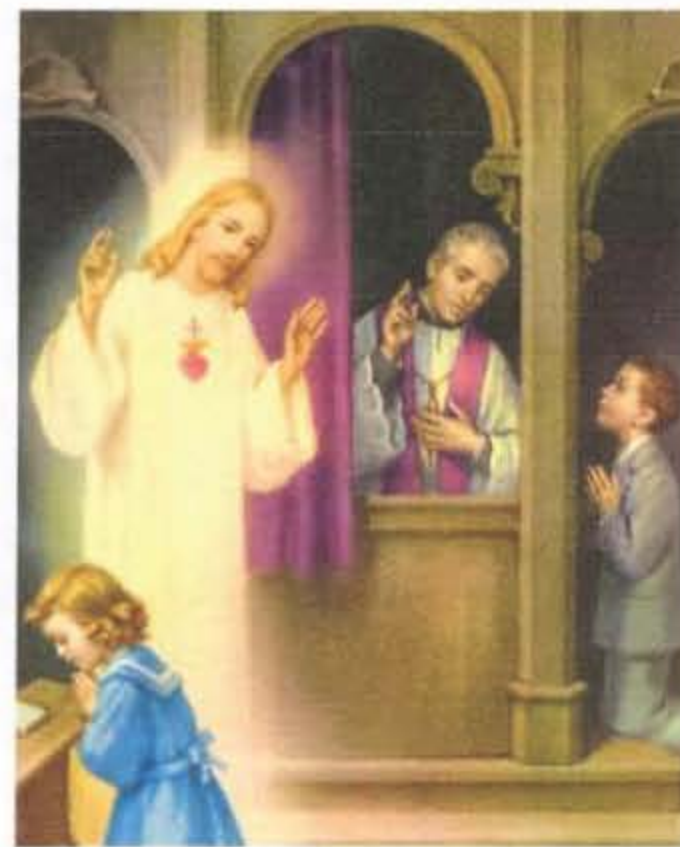
The priest is a son of humanity given the power to make us the sons of God! The priest is a servant of God. He must face death; all the while he has the keys of salvation. The priest is another Christ and there is none so beloved and hated as him. The priest is often at the center of controversy.

Great initiatives, generous works and superior sacrifices have been his contribution to society. The priest is a person of integrity and silence. When a man falls down because of human weakness, he is forgiven, but for the priest there is no forgiveness, only criticism and judgment. Who are they who judge and condemn the priest? They are often those he has served faithfully and well.

At the dawn of our lives, the priest is there to baptize us. Through his office and by his hands, the stain of Original Sin is washed from our soul and we are admitted into the Family of the Living. *"I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."* Sanctifying Grace fills the soul and the infant becomes a child of God. At this point, the devil surely cries out, ***"O priest, you have beaten me!"***

At the dawn of adolescent, the young adult will emerge into puberty and many times be challenged by the world, the flesh and the devil. The graces of Baptism will not be enough. The Sacrament of Confirmation is needed. By this Sacrament, he becomes a soldier of Jesus Christ and is given new strength to live and defend his Catholic Faith against the enemies of the soul. The Bishop (who is a priest) anoints the youth and asks the Holy Ghost to come and fill him with His Seven Gifts and Twelve Fruits. The confirmed is then given the strength of a soldier and the power to resist temptation and do good.

The priest gives us, every day, the Holy Eucharist for our spiritual nourishment. While our lives are filled with dangers, temptations and uncertainty, we have great need of Heavenly Bread to nourish and strengthen our soul. The youngest and the oldest, the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate are all invited to receive Our Blessed Lord, daily, at the Holy Altar in humble village hamlets and great Cathedrals.



The priest offers them the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It is in our great hour of need, the priest has the power to cure the injuries of the soul, after sin has been committed. In the Christian life, there rises up tempests of trials which can make us slaves of the devil. But, the voice of the humble priest has the Power of God to say to the sinner, *"I forgive you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."* These words

terrify the devil and he takes flight. Thus, peace and serenity are restored to the miserable sinner.

Only the priest can bless the love of two people who promise fidelity to each other at the Sacred Altar in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The new family, the basic unit of civil society, is blessed by Almighty God and takes root in society with the religious benediction of the priest. The priest unites his efforts with those of the parents to educate the offspring of their union in the teaching of the Faith and to prepare them for the reception of the Sacraments.

The priest is with us at the point of our departure from this earth, in death, unto eternity. The poor soul in the throes of death is terrified with fear at the prospect of facing Almighty God. The priest is at his side to forgive him and to remind him of the great mercy of God, giving him the courage to focus all his desires upon Heaven. The priest blesses his body and directs all the longings of his soul to God. Every day at Holy Mass in

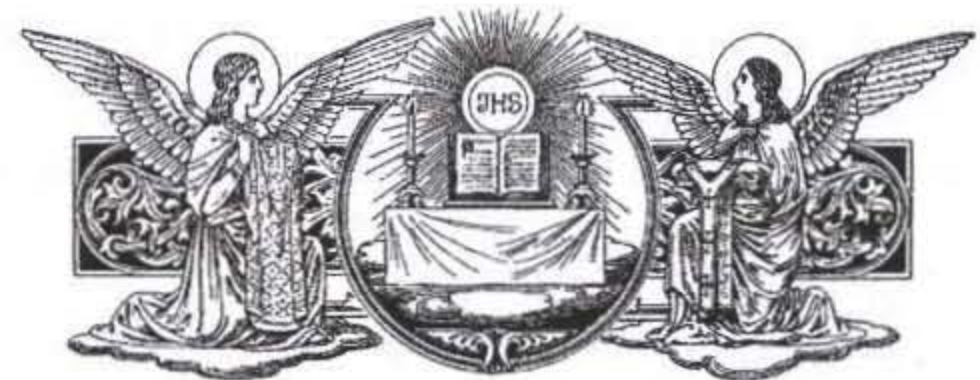
the momento for the souls departed, he unites us to the death of Christ and prays for the release of the souls who are suffering in Purgatory.

The obligations of a priest are not only for those moments in life at which time we stand most in need, but they spread to all branches of humanity. Where there is sadness, he may give joy; where there is injustice, righteousness will be defended; he encourages youth to be firm in virtue, obedient to their parents, faithful to duty and to be a respecter of other persons. He enlightens souls of their obligations to God, family and humanity. He reminds wealthy persons of the obligations they have to help others, and to pay a just salary. Thieves and robbers are exposed and decried. He defends fidelity and purity in the people of God. Because his mission is a mission of truth, the priest is the **'salt of the earth'**. Truth is not accountable. Truth is One! Only the preaching of the priest enlightens and directs humanity for our short walk in life. In the last twenty centuries, thousands of priests have sacrificed their lives and suffered intense martyrdom to obtain from God the spread of His Kingdom upon Earth.



There is no good work upon earth in which the priest has not offered his help. He performs duties in education, arts and research; he has founded institutes for charity, universities for education, hospitals for the sick and homes for the elderly. Works that civilize missions and enrich cultures are all examples of his love and zeal. Servants of peace and love, these priests continue to give without receiving any recompense in return. Often, they are repaid with hate and cruelty. For his sacrifice, the priest is to be respected. When he falls short of performing his duty through human weakness, still he is due respect. He is the person, who represents Jesus Christ and is clothed in the power of His office. St. Francis said, *"If I should meet an angel and a priest, I would first greet the priest, for the angel is a friend of God while the priest is God's Minister."*

All Christians have a duty to the priest. A society without a priest, will not better itself. St. John Marie Vianney said, *"Leave a place without a priest and, after 20 years, man begins to venerate the animals."* There are two ways to help priests: pray for them, that they will be pious and holy. Pray that Christ will send many priests into His vineyard so that the harvest will be great. Help with funds for priestly vocations and support seminarians in third world countries. One who gives a priest to the Church, is giving another Christ. The gift of a priest to a nation is the most beautiful gift that can be given.



PRAYER FOR PRIESTS



Pour out, O my God, on your priests, in all its fullness, the spirit of sacrifice. For it is alike their duty and their glory to be offerings, consumed for the souls of men and to suffer many times distrust, injustice and persecution. May they ponder what they say every day at the Altar: *"This is My Body, this is My Blood!"* May they dwell on it and apply it to themselves: *"I am no longer myself but, so to speak, Jesus and Jesus Crucified!"*

O my God, I am on fire with longing that Thy priests may be holy. I earnestly desire that all those consecrated hands which touch Thee may be kindly hands whose touch Thou may find sweet, and that the lips which pronounce at the Altar words so sublime may never be desecrated by anything trivial or unbecoming.

May they live up to the ideal of their high calling! May all men find them, like the Host, simple and great, accessible to all and servants of other men!

O my God, grant that they may take from today's Mass a thirst for tomorrow's and that, being themselves full of the gifts they have received, they may have grace to impart them abundantly to others.
Amen.

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Quebeci, die 14a septembris 1968



Prayer to St. Jean-Marie Vianney

Almighty
and Merciful God,
Thou didst make
St. Jean-Marie Vianney
wonderful by his pastoral
zeal and constant prayer
and penance.

Grant, we beseech Thee
that, by his example
and intercession,
we may be able to win
the souls of our brethren
for Christ and, together
with them, attain to
everlasting glory.
Through Christ
Our Lord. Amen.

St. Jean-Marie Vianney,
Patron of All Parish
Priests, Pray for Us!

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