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 remind him of the great Mercy of God, giving him the courage to focus all his desires upon Heaven. He blesses his body and directs all the longings of his soul to God. Every day at Holy Mass in the memento 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 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 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. Saint Jean 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, and 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.
Pour out, O my God, on Thy 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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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!

“You must accept your cross; if you bear it courageously, it will carry you to Heaven.”

~ St. Jean-Marie Vianney ~