



Venerable JOSÉ MARÍA GARCÍA LAHIGUERA

Archbishop Emeritus of Valencia
Founder of the
Oblate Sisters of Christ the Priest

SACERDOS ET HOSTIA

*«These words have been my life on earth
and I hope they will be my glory in heaven»*

To report received graces or to deliver donations:

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Prayer

For private devotion

Holy Father, source of all holiness, who hast deigned to confer your faithful son José Maria the fullness of priesthood, thus identifying him with Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest: We humbly pray now for you to grant us the grace we plead, trusting in his intercession, so that one day the Church, which he loved and served with the total offering of his life, will raise him to the honors of the altars, to the glory of your name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory)

In accordance with the decree of Pope Urban VIII, in no way it is intended to prevent the judgment of the Church. This prayer does not have any purpose of public worship.

Biographical notice

José María García Lahiguera was born in Fitero (Navarra-Spain) March 9, 1903, and was baptized three days later. During his lifetime, he always wanted to follow the action of the Holy Spirit in him. When he was still young, he expressed his desire to be a priest, and at Madrid Seminar he left a durable memory of his great virtue. Ordained on May 29, 1926, he was soon called to be spiritual director of the seminarians. Full of zeal for priestly holiness, he founded in 1938 with Mother M^a del Carmen Hidalgo de Caviedes the Oblate Sisters of Christ Priest, a Congregation of contemplative life, which attained Pontifical approval in 1967. D. Jose Maria was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Madrid in 1950; Bishop of Huelva in 1964; and Archbishop of Valencia in 1969. Promoter of the Feast of Christ the Eternal High Priest, he was happy to see this celebration introduced in the liturgical calendar of Spain in 1973. He died in Madrid, on July 14, 1989, with fame of holiness. His body rests in the Motherhouse chapel of the Oblate Sisters of Christ Priest. Pope Benedict XVI declared him «Venerable» on June 27, 2011.

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Reported graces

A relative of mine was in an unfortunate situation due to a problem of drugs and alcohol, that in addition to having caused him to lose his job, to have problems with the law, to suffer a lot and to make his family suffer too, gave him cirrhosis which put him in an almost terminal state. I was insistently requesting the intercession of Don Jose Maria in this very painful case, and at a moment when the process seemed to have no way out, I went to the tomb of the Venerable to ask for help more intensely. Some time later, the situation of this man improved notably in all aspects, so that, together with the family, I give infinite thanks to God and to Don Jose Maria.

M. E.— Madrid



Due to a circulatory complication in the fingers of one hand, Sister Paloma, according to the doctors, should undergo the amputation of at least one phalanx, as the gangrene advanced. The director of the Priestly Consistory heard about the case on Thursday afternoon, after the celebration of Christ the Priest, and prayed with great faith asking the miracle of her healing through the intercession of the Venerable Jose Maria Garcia Lahiguera, setting me as a witness, with the intuition that something would happen, since the Lord had moved him to pray for it in that way. On Saturday, the nurses noticed an improvement in healing. On Monday, the chief physician, who had not seen her for eight days, observing the finger exclaimed: "Something has happened here, this is not how I left it! This has been something from above, because I have done nothing more than continue with the treatment" (which was initially ineffective). The finger has progressively improved, until it has a normal appearance and color. For us this has been a very palpable sign of the protection of the Father and that invoking his intercession is truly effective.

M. Mercedes- Moncada, Valencia

Hoja Informativa
De la vida y fama de santidad del
Venerable José María García Lahiguera, Arzobispo

II

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Martyr Triennium (1936-1939)

In July 1936, at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, D. Jose Maria was in Madrid with his family. From the balcony of his house he was

horrified to see the assault on the Mountain Headquarters, and recited the first prayers for the eternal rest of the fallen. The state of fear and anguish that initially gripped him by these doings soon changed into fearlessness when he was notified that a good woman, on the verge of dying, asked for spiritual help. "They call me to exercise my ministry, and I cannot deny myself, even if it costs me my life." In fact, several times he was about to pass away during those years of violent religious persecution. During a house search in his family home, the militiamen, who were looking for his brother, Jesus, saw a portrait of Don Jose Maria dressed as a priest. He said: "Yes, that's me."

Nothing happened then, but in view of the danger, both brothers took refuge at the Embassy of Finland. However, in December 1936, mobs assaulted the Legation without respecting the diplomatic immunity, and when they found priestly ornaments in a room, they asked who the priest was. D. Jose Maria went forward to confess that it was him, although there were other refugee priests there. He was imprisoned and sentenced to death "just for being a priest." He was saved thanks to the diligence of his sister Asuncion and by the instance of his brother Antonio, then Secretary of the Spanish Republic Ambassador in Washington. Once released, he obtained



Antonio, José María, Jesus and Asunción García Lahiguera with their mother—1930.

a book agent card, with which he circulated in Madrid in search of priests and seminarians in need of help. Some were hidden, suffering all sorts of hardships; Others came and went from the battle fronts. D. José María, together with a team of intrepid collaborators, sought - by ingenious means and often depriving himself and his family - the most basic things for each one: food, medicines, lodging, documentation, hosts and wine to celebrate, stipends and other aid. But above all, through direct and personal contact, he gave those persecuted priests (many of whom were going to suffer martyrdom) the spiritual encouragement they needed so badly.

In various places of the capital, and always clandestinely, he regularly celebrated Holy Mass, organized meetings and spiritual retreats, heard confessions and attended to countless faithful, priests and seminarians, taking special care of those who came from the war front. To these he also gave some consecrated Hosts so that they could take Holy Communion to their companions who were on the front line or in the barracks. For the younger seminarians who had not yet been mobilized, he coordinated classes of Latin and philosophy taught by competent teachers, which would help them persevere in their vocation. He also established a permanent service of urgent spiritual care, especially for the sick and dying.

In May 1938, Bishop Leopoldo Eijo Garay, who was in the national zone and who was practically cut off from his faithful from the other zone, appointed D. José María Vicario General in the Red Madrid. His selflessness and courageous actions, along with that of other heroic priests, and his constant solicitude for those clergy in the catacombs, effectively contributed to keeping up the morale (key of resistance) of that ecclesial community so troubled, in which the presbytery of Madrid wrote a glorious page of fidelity and martyrdom.



D. José María M^a in a slum of Madrid in the postwar period. The deprivation was much greater in the besieged city during the conflict, as reflected with humor in the letter of D. José M^a to his friend Domingo Pascual.



Prison of San Antón, installed in the former College of Escolapios, where D. José María was held for a time



Letters from Venerable José María García Lahiguera during the war

November 12, 1937

Your Excellency, Bishop of Madrid.

My beloved Bishop, I am writing to you as a Father in this occasion and I take this opportunity to reiterate to you my absolute and cordial adherence and obedience, the unique norm of my priesthood. I want to bring you consolation in the midst of so much sorrow and bitterness. I bless the Providence who disposed that the war caught me in Madrid. I will never know how to repay this benefit. These are unique circumstances in life and we should make the best use of them. One lives always dependent on God. What could be better than to foster faith and trust in Our Lord? The work is hard, the difficulties are great and constant, but the consolation is continuous and immense.

I guess you know what is done here. Your clergy are up to the occasion. It is an honor to belong to a class of anonymous and selfless heroes. The seminarians are attended to as circumstances permit. We have even been able to make retreats. But this is very long; there are many of them by the fronts and barracks. Anyway, I see that the "many are invited, but few are chosen" will be fulfilled. But, all the better! Thus from the first day the seminarian will live up to what the Church and the Homeland demand of us for the future.

May you keep blessing us everyday. To those who work in that other part of the vineyard, affectionate memories from a brother. And may this submissive son of yours have a special blessing and your pastoral ring to respectfully kiss it.

José M^a G. Lahiguera



1932

Madrid - September 8, 1938

My Friend Domingo:

Do not be upset about the oil. We are at war and we must realize the sacrifices that it demands continuously, above all, as you know, to the heroic inhabitants of this unequalled Madrid - the most punished, because it will soon reach the second year of its siege-, which is not enough to make them lose their good mood. So no pain, for there is no tin of that liqueur, gods' ambrosia, nectar of Olympus, which is called oil and I think it is a liquid they say is used to fry some strange things called potatoes and some white balls they say are eggs, which are produced by some little animals that perhaps breed in the pole or in the equator, because by these latitudes the species has disappeared. I think there are some feathers left.

I appreciate your invitation to spend some time with you. I need it, because we have been two intense years at the foot of the canyon (and it is not a set phrase, because here we have the missiles almost daily for snacking and for evening desserts. Oh amazing Madrid!). I would go, but another sacrifice that war demands is not to leave the post that the cause has set to each one. A day will come when we will rest satisfied, not only for having finished the war, but for the victory achieved, the more loved the more it costs us. Regards to your father and the others. Receive them from my family, grateful to all your attentions. You know you can rely on this your good friend

José María