



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”*

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Prayer

For private devotion

O God the Father, source of all holiness, who hast deigned to confer the fullness of the priesthood on your son José María, thus identifying him with Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest: We humbly pray now that you 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 proclaim him a saint, for the glory of your name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory)

In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgment of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.

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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Testimony

In the last months of his life, he lost the possibility of communicating orally, but he did it through gestures, with his eyes, expressing his full conformity to the will of God and the consecration of his life as an oblation, joined to the eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

José María was an exemplary priest, a holy priest, I dare say. He was a teacher of spirituality for many generations of priests, among whom I had the honor and luck of being included. His personal piety was rich, but strong, authentic, true. He always taught seminarians and priests that the priestly ministry, which permanently offers the sacrifice of Christ, must be lived with a spirit of oblation, of personal sacrifice.

José María was an important figure of the so-called priestly movement, which emerged in Spain back in the thirties and forties, and to which the spiritual renewal of the Spanish diocesan clergy owed so much.



Valencia - 1971

It could be said that priestly holiness was the obsession of his life. He dedicated all his energies to promoting it; he spent his life and was spent in order to renew the spiritual life of priests. The introduction of the feast of Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest into the Spanish liturgical calendar was due to his initiative, his perseverance and kind insistence. This feast can be considered the symbol of his spirituality.

José María joyfully lived his episcopate as the fullness of priesthood, but he also had to experience as a bishop the difficult years of the priestly crisis in the post-conciliar times, which caused him — endowed as he was with an acute sensitivity and in love with his priesthood— an intimate and profound pain, and he ended up falling ill. That crisis must have been for him a very hard trial, which he overcame precisely through his great love for priests.

Miguel Roca Cabanellas († 1992)
Sucessor of D. José María as Archbishop of Valencia



From the writings of José María García Lahiguera

To set eyes on Christ is to realize that he is the Mediator, the "Pontiff", who stands as a bridge between God and men. It is the quintessence of his being: the incarnate Word is Priest because he is the Christ, "the Anointed One".

In the Incarnation he presents the eternal offering he makes of himself before the Father: "You do not like the

victims and the burnt offerings, but you have given me a body" (cf Hebrews 10:5).

Let us enter into the intimacy of that Heart, newly formed from Our Lady's flesh and blood. What was his first heartbeat? At the threshold of created time, he said his first human words: simultaneous and equal to the words he pronounces as the eternal Word; and simultaneously with the same words that the chosen woman said when she accepted to be his Mother: "Let it be done". It is a heartbeat of love: "The law of your divine will is engraved in my heart" (cf Hebrews 10:7). And that "Let it be done", which resounded in the bosom of the Holy Trinity when the world was created, is the "Let it be done" uttered by the Son at the precise moment of his entrance into this world, which he will repeat without ceasing and which is the ultimate explanation of his whole life on earth.

When we see him hiding or fleeing, teaching, healing the sick, defending the oppressed, caressing the children..., deep down he is only doing one thing: the will of the Father. If we wanted to capture the most intimate feeling of the Heart of Christ, we would have this answer: "I am not doing my own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Lourdes - 1970

But in order to prevent a servile interpretation of the oft-repeated saying about "doing the will of the Father and not his", he also pronounced that other sublime sentence: "I am not alone ... The Father has not left me alone, for I always do the things that please him." He shows there all the tenderness, all the delicacy, sensitivity and finesse of his filial love. "Yes," the Lord wants to tell us, "that is my food, my own being and life. Because, consciously, joyfully, blissfully and out of love for my Father, I always look for and choose what pleases him most and I do it."

The Father will certainly answer: "In my beloved Son I have my complacencies. He is an extraordinary creature. He wants nothing but me. He never seeks his will but mine."

Let's enter into the mystery of this filial obedience.

What an elevation of human nature is the mystery of Christ! Christ, with his priesthood and sacrifice, has given to man the grace of being, like him, son of God.

Man will no longer have the possibility of giving glory to the Father as a mere element of the universe, but he will rather glorify the Father "like Christ", that is, as a son.



Minas de San Telmo - 1967

thinking, of focusing, of deciding and acting, which is always based on faith.



Huelva - 1966



It is a question of faith. Therefore, we must always live with a deep faith that vitalizes all our actions. Obedience is not a complete thing in itself, but part of a whole formed by a way of

(Spiritual retreat 1967)

Reported Graces

• Several months ago I went to visit a Dominican sister I am very fond of, but I could not see her because at that moment they took her in an ambulance to the residence of Cáceres. The next day I asked for her and they told me that the doctors had sent urgently for her family, because she only had hours left to live, since all her organs had stopped working. Then, filled with sadness, I began to pray with devotion to our beloved Father José María, asking for her to be healed. The sister was healed, to the surprise of the doctors, who could not believe their eyes and said "this is a miracle". Thank you very much, Father José María.

M^a del Consuelo Andrés Díez- Mérida

• My daughter-in-law was operated on because she had an ovarian cyst. They did not feed her and only gave her I.V., which was strange because the day after such an operation they normally give the patients bland-diet food. Finally, I was told that her colon had been punctured and had developed septicemia. The doctors told us that she was in serious danger and she needed surgery again. I took the portrait of Father José María and I prayed with the utmost devotion. After a third surgical operation to stop a hemorrhage and several blood transfusions, she was able to leave the ICU. The recovery was quick and after a few days she went home. Father José María granted us this gift and it is not the first thing I have received by his intercession. I hope he will soon be declared a saint.

M. Natalia Pérez Gayangos—Huelva

• We send you this little donation in gratitude, because my wife asked Father José María for the miracle of finding a job for my daughter and soon she was hired. Father José María is always making our life better, because not only is my daughter employed, I am really happy to see my six-year-old grandson Alberto, who had a sore throat and a high fever and was likely to stay ill for several more days. When my wife Magdalena prayed for him, the next day my grandchild had no fever, and went to school as if nothing were the matter with him. So thank you very much and I ask you to continue praying for us affectionately.

José Rodríguez Vargas - Huelva

