



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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www.oblatasdecristosacerdote.com

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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Newsletter
on the life and holiness fame of
Venerable José María García Lahiguera, Archbishop

II

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From the writings of
JOSÉ MARÍA GARCÍA LAHIGUERA

WHAT IS HOLINESS?

God is Holiness, but He is also Love. So, the word "holiness", which is so excellent and sublime that it escapes us, seems to descend and become the "need" of the heart: love. And if my life has been given to me in order to be holy, this word no longer leaves me stunned, like Moses before the bush that was on fire but did not burn up, nor wrapped in a miraculous cloud, as in the dedication of Solomon's temple. Instead, I feel that I am given a wide door and easy entry, knowing that holiness is the same as love (Spiritual Exercises 1973).



For us, holiness consists in reflecting in our soul the "form" of God. But what form does God have? We benefit from the mystery of the Incarnation: God become Man, Christ. And through that divinely inspired story – the Gospel – we are given the "form" of his life. So, if we are doing what He did, we are acquiring "God's form". We are increasingly "deiform" (Retreats I, 1956).

"We would like to see Jesus," said those Gentiles in the Gospel. We also want to see the Master. Knowledge is going to be the link that bonds both lives: his and mine. He wants me to love him with the madness of the saints. He wants me to know him, so that my love has nothing useless, nothing foolish, nothing... I don't know, so that it is only what love should be: true, practical, positive, constructive, and real. "We want to know you, Lord. To love you without limit. To follow you constantly, happily" (Spiritual Exercises 1959).



1950

AUXILIARY BISHOP OF MADRID

On May 13, 1950, Father José María received two important news from the Holy See: the concession of the Nihil Obstat to the Oblate Sisters of Christ the Priest and his election as Auxiliary Bishop of Madrid-Alcalá. He was consecrated the following October 29 in the Basilica of San Francisco el

Grande. He never saw it as an honorary promotion, but rather as a new call to serve the Church, and a great grace from God: the fullness of the priesthood. For his episcopal coat of arms, he chose the motto "Anima mea pro ovibus meis" (Jn 10,15), that of the Good Shepherd, Christ the Priest, who gives his life for his sheep.

Despite his health problems (a very annoying ear disease), he gave himself fully to the absorbing tasks that Patriarch Leopoldo Eijo Garay entrusted to him, in a diocese that was experiencing an unstoppable demographic explosion. Pastoral visits were exclusively under his charge during the 1950-51 academic year. Bishop José María visited more than 30 parishes a year, with the consequent celebrations, homilies, meetings, confirmations, visits to schools, convents and diverse centers of each parish. From 1951 he would share the work with Bishop Juan Ricote, who had been consecrated as second Auxiliary Bishop.



1956 - Pastoral visit to towns

He had no vacations. He slept little. At the end of each day, his mind occupied with multiple and serious problems, he prayed for a long time in his chapel, so that he could return joyfully to his ministry on the next day.



1952



1953 - School S. Luis Gonzaga

Nocturnal Adoration Society, President of the National Commission of Spiritual Exercises, National Councilor for Education, etc., etc.

Nevertheless, priests were always first in his priorities and he frequently received them as if he had all the time in the world, listening to them with great interest and kindness. The establishment of the Priestly Sanctification Day in the Diocese of Madrid-Alcalá in 1950 was undoubtedly due to his initiative. Although Patriarch-

Bishop Eijo Garay liked to preside over that priestly meeting at the Seminary, it was Bishop José María who spoke to the priests on his behalf.

He had a cordial relationship of ecclesial communion with his prelate. There are several handwritten documents where we can read how Bishop José María reported his actions and the Patriarch answered:



1959 - At the Madrid seminar

— *"My dearest and most respected Patriarch, I understand the anguish Your Excellency must be suffering faced with the problem of the shortage of clergy in the Diocese ... I couldn't sleep for two nights. The appointments are being finalized, but there are still gaps to fill, and it scares me to think that there is no solution until the next batch. We must pray much to the Lord of the harvest!"*

— *Answer: "I feel for you, but at the same time it comforts me to see you already suffering with me. No one imagines the sufferings of a Bishop due to the lack of clergy. And also, to the lack of money. And let's not talk about the lack of virtue to sanctify others, and the lack of merits to earn the necessary appreciation of the subjects! In this latter issue, Our Lord usually makes up the deficiency; when it comes to money, though, He is usually not so splendid; and regarding the lack of clergy, even less so."*

In the words of Bishop Eijo, he and his two Auxiliaries were "trinity in unity".

With true charity, he took care of the poor and helpless, who some days literally filled his waiting room.

He continued to be a General Visitor of Religious Women, and he always looked after them in a very delicate and meticulous manner. In addition, he was Spiritual Director of the Spanish



1950 - With D. Leopoldo Eijo

Reported graces

When my daughter's contract expired, it being impossible to renew it, I asked my dear saint again, and my daughter not only has had her contract renewed, but they have made her a staff member and also a boss. I can't stop thanking him every day.

José Rodríguez Vargas—Huelva



1952 - Pastoral visit to a neighborhood of Madrid

We write to you to communicate a grace that Bishop José María García Lahiguera has granted us. We have asked him with devotion to help us with a very important decision. And all doubts have been dispelled regarding the decision. I communicate it to you with great joy and I firmly pray that his holiness may soon be recognized as he deserves.

Cristhiane Claudia—Badajoz



1960

I am writing to give thanks for the favors received from Bishop José María García Lahiguera, because just by praying to him a mole that was somewhat altered healed without leaving a trace, thank you.

María Eugenia Muñoz García—Málaga



1954 - Cercedilla

I am writing to give thanks for the great miracle that Bishop José María García Lahiguera has done for me. I was able to travel to Seville to see my father; and my husband, who has been in a coma three times, got well. It was a great miracle for me.

Mari Luz Sanz—Alcalá de Henares