

Priest's Saturday  
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Priest's Saturday: ...  
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# PRIEST'S SATURDAY

*An Explanation of a  
Timely Practice for  
the Sanctification  
of Priests and  
Candidates for  
the Priesthood*



Marie M. Hughes

The SALVATORIAN FATHERS  
Publishing Dept.  
ST. NAZIANZ WIS.



# The Newly Ordained Priest



Jesus, Savior of the world, sanctify Thy priests and levites. (300 days' indulgence.)

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# Priest's Saturday

An Explanation of a Timely Practice  
for the Sanctification of Priests and  
Candidates for the Priesthood.

FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES

by

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## PRIEST'S SATURDAY

### *Divine Savior, Sanctify Thy Priests!*

To Our Catholic People:

Listen to what our Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, says:

“God in heaven and I on earth, we desire nothing more ardently than prayer and sacrifice for priests . . . Let us beg God that He may give us holy priests! If we have this, all else will follow; but if this be wanting, all else will avail nothing.” It was from this trend of thought that the idea of the “Priest’s Saturday” took its origin, which idea the Superior General of the Salvatorian Fathers placed before the Holy Father in special private audience on November 21, 1934. His Holiness was much pleased with the plan and said, in conclusion: “We heartily praise and bless the work . . . . We repeat, the thing pleases Us, We praise and bless it heartily.”—What is this plan?

### **The Priest’s Saturday**

It is something quite simple and easy, yet immeasurably great in its results. You should make it a point to offer the Saturday after the First Friday of each month to your Savior, through the hands of Mary, the great mediatrix of all graces, for the sanctification of all the priests and students for the priesthood throughout the whole world. For this purpose you should give the Saturday wholly and entirely to Him, that is to say, Holy Mass, Holy Communion, all prayers, labors, sacrifices, joys, and

sorrows. Whatever you cannot do on this day (Holy Mass and Holy Communion) you ought to supply immediately on Sunday. So there is really nothing new for you to do. You merely offer up this Saturday (or even every Saturday) for the sanctification of priests. It is not a case of any sodality or fraternity or anything like that. Like the First Friday in honor of the Sacred Heart, the Priest's Saturday seeks to become something religiously observed by all the Catholics of the world.

As the Holy Father, so also bishops and priests have greeted the Priest's Saturday with joy, have blessed it, and have recommended it to all. Bishop Dr. Nicholas Bares of Berlin, from whose diocese the Priest's Saturday went out into the world, said: "It is with great joy that I welcome this saving thought of the Priest's Saturday. If a holy priest is the gift of heaven to earth, then the efforts of the faithful, through prayer and sacrifice, for holy priests will be the fairest gift of earth to heaven . . . Therefore I wholeheartedly recommend and bless this work."

Concern about the holiness of priests is the concern of the Heart of the Divine Savior and of His Blessed Mother. Therefore, you also should be sure to take part in this "apostolate to the apostles." The Holy Father, all bishops, all priests, all students for the priesthood, and especially also your own pastor, earnestly beg of you thus to participate.

### Remarks

1. The Priest's Saturday brings about an intimate union between priests and people. Surely the people will welcome with great joy



the opportunity thus given to co-operate, by prayer and sacrifice, with the priest in all the work that he does for the parish. They will thus merit to have, and will efficaciously make, zealous and holy priests. Experience shows that also the children easily understand the Priest's Saturday and enter with joy upon this apostolate.

2. Especially the sick, the convalescent, and the bodily disabled, who are often so deeply pious and abounding in virtue, will find Priest's Saturday a great and apostolic field of holy endeavor and their lonely days will take on a new and profound significance as they realize that a marvelous life-work lies open before them. Such unselfish and holy effort in behalf of priests, such prayers and sacrifices, will yield most glorious fruits and the world will soon feel the blessed influence of the Priest's Saturday.

3. New vocations to the priesthood will be aroused and fostered, and surely in many a woman's soul, as she prays and sacrifices for the sanctification of priests, the hidden wish will be felt: "Oh, if I myself might become the mother of a priest!"

4. God grant that all take part in this great "apostolate to the apostles"! Surely it is a thing most pleasing to God and most fruitful in blessings here upon earth, even as it redounds to the salvation of countless souls. Spread this idea wherever and whenever you can. Be a promoter. Get others to spread and promote it. Remember that concern for the sanctification of priests is most dear to the Sacred Heart of the Divine Savior and to the Sweet Heart of His Blessed Mother. It is their concern.

## Offering to be Made of the Priest's Saturday

Divine Savior Jesus Christ, Who hast entrusted the whole work of Thy redemption, the welfare and salvation of the world, to priests as Thy representatives, through the hands of Thy most holy Mother and for the sanctification of Thy priests and candidates for the priesthood I offer thee this present day wholly and entirely, with all its prayers, works, joys, sacrifices, and sorrows.

Give us truly holy priests who, inflamed with the fire of Thy divine love, seek nothing but Thy greater glory and the salvation of our souls.

And thou, Mary, good Mother of priests, protect all priests in the dangers of their holy vocation and with the loving hand of a Mother, also lead back to the Good Shepherd those poor priests who have become unfaithful to their exalted vocation and have gone astray. Amen.

*In addition to the above make it a point also to recite frequently the following:*

### Prayer for My Pastor and for All Priests

Divine Savior Jesus Christ, Who hast entrusted the weal and woe of Thy Holy Church to priests, with all the fervor of my heart I recommend to Thee the wants of my pastor and all priests. Enrich them more and more with true priestly sanctity! Give them generous, all-embracing, apostolic hearts, full of love for Thee and for all Thy souls, so that they, being themselves sanctified in Thee may sanctify us who are confided to their care and

may lead us safely to heaven. Bestow upon them in rich abundance all Thy priestly graces! Let them ever give us a glowing example of love and fidelity towards Holy Mother Church, towards the Pope and bishops, and grant that by word and example they may shine as models of every virtue.

Most loving Jesus, bless all their priestly labors and sacrifices! Bless all their prayers and words at the altar and in the confessional, in the pulpit, and in school, in confraternities and at the bedside of the sick! Protect and preserve them in all dangers from within and from without!

Divine Savior, give to Thy Church priests who abound in true holiness! Call many good boys and young men to the priestly and religious state! Aid and sanctify all those who are to become Thy priests. — And to the souls of departed priests grant everlasting rest!

But to me give a true spirit of faith and humble obedience, in order that in my pastor I may ever behold the representative of God and willingly follow all his teachings! Amen.

{One who recites any ecclesiastically approved prayer for vocations to the priestly and religious state can gain an indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines; and once a month, if the prayer is said every day, a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions.—Pius X, Oct. 27 and Nov. 9, 1907.}



## FATHER GENERAL ON THE AIR

### Regarding Priest's Saturday

On July 24, 1936, the Most Rev. Pancratius Pfeiffer, Superior General of the Society of the Divine Savior, gave an address on Priest's Saturday over the Vatican Radio Station, Vatican City, Italy. He spoke as follows:

Some time ago the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, in a discourse delivered by him, gave utterance to the following striking words: "Let us beg God that He give us holy priests! If we have this, all else will follow; but if this be wanting, all else will avail nothing." The realm of things religious is here meant. The Holy Father spoke the above-mentioned words with great emphasis,—a sign of what importance he attached to them. Furthermore, we know from the Gospel how at the Last Supper the Savior Himself prayed for His Apostles: "Father, sanctify them in truth!" In a similar way does the Catholic Church pray in her liturgy: *Ut Deo ab omnibus gradibus fideliter serviatur*—that God may be faithfully served by all the degrees (of the hierarchy).

Two years ago a certain pious practice came into being. It consists in this, that prayers be offered in a special way for the sanctification of priests and candidates for the priesthood throughout the Catholic world. This is done in the following way. All who engage to practice this devotion, every month on a fixed day offer up through the hands of the Mother of God, for priests and candidates for the priesthood throughout the Catholic world, Holy Mass and Communion as well as all the prayers and good works performed during that

day; and this they do that God may sanctify them, so that they may be or may become priests after His own Heart. This pious practice was started by the Society of the Divine Savior, whose members, called Salvatorians, make it their task everywhere to preach Christ the Savior, in order that the human race redeemed by Him may find in Him its temporal and eternal happiness. The Founder of this religious Congregation was the German priest Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, who was born in 1848 at Gurtweil in Baden and died in the odor of sanctity at Tifers in Switzerland in 1918.

The pious practice mentioned was joyfully received by priests and people. About a year after it had started it already numbered *nearly three million adherents*. Over two hundred bishops of various countries and parts of the world welcomed the practice and praised it as a means of obtaining from the good God the holiness of priests and candidates for the priesthood through united prayer and of ever more closely binding priests and people together in one common endeavor. The spread of the devotion was made considerably easier inasmuch as it is not a case of a confraternity or a society but solely of a pious practice that requires neither a formal reception nor a registering of names nor annual dues. It is a practice of a purely religious character, which requires nothing more than prayer for the sanctification of priests and candidates for the priesthood, and that in accord with the prayer of the Savior at the Last Supper: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are. I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated

them, because they are not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. Sanctify them in truth."

Catholic people, everywhere, who know the value of the priesthood and of the good priest and who also know full well what power there is in trustful prayer in common, rightly appreciated the importance of the devotion. This is the explanation of the remarkable fact that in less than two years *four million Catholics in various countries and nations have made their own the pious practice and that the prayer of offering is already said in more than fifteen languages, even in Chinese and Arabic.* All pray in the same way in their own tongue: Father, sanctify them! Grant that they may be one!

The Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, to whom the Superior General of the Society of the Divine Savior made a report on this pious practice in the year 1934, spoke words of gracious acknowledgment. "We heartily praise and bless the work," said His Holiness. "We repeat: the thing pleases Us, We praise and bless it heartily." In the following year, 1935, the Holy Father, in the same spirit and with the same benevolence, bestowed the Apostolic Benediction, and that through a special document of His Eminence Cardinal Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State, with the wish "that this timely practice for priests and the souls entrusted to them may be a source of abundant graces."

As regards the choice of the day on which to practice this devotion, the Saturday after the first Friday of each month was at first chosen. The special reason for this was because on the First Friday many of the faithful go to the

Sacraments; and so the reception of the Sacraments or of Holy Communion on the day immediately following does not place any great additional burden on the priests who hear confessions. It seemed well to take this circumstance into consideration in countries where there is a scarcity of priests. From the choice of Saturday came the name Priest's Saturday. Under this name the pious practice is known, for instance, universally in Germany, in Austria, and in Switzerland. (Editor's note: And in the United States.) *In numerous dioceses it is held as a congregational devotion by ordinance of the respective bishops.*

When in 1935 the very important Papal Encyclical Letter on the Catholic Priesthood appeared with the added new votive Mass to honor Jesus Christ, Supreme and Eternal Priest, in which Encyclical the Holy Father emphasizes so strongly and desires so ardently the holiness of priests, the wish was expressed that the pious practice of Priest's Saturday might be brought into connection with the above-mentioned Encyclical and votive Mass. Because Thursday was chosen for the votive Mass the desire manifested itself here and there, also in high ecclesiastical circles, that, instead of Saturday, Thursday should be chosen. The Holy Father, asked about the matter, approved of the thought that Thursday be preferred in connection with the votive Mass; yet those who for certain reasons, such as those indicated above, e. g., easier reception of the Sacraments, retain the Saturday are not to be hindered. Moreover, His Holiness decreed that if with the permission of the Most Reverend Bishop of the place prayers in common are said in a church

or chapel for the sanctification of priests on the first Thursday or Saturday of the month, a votive Mass to honor Jesus Christ, Supreme and Eternal Priest, may be read, also then when the rite of the day does not otherwise permit a votive Mass. The Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites regarding this matter was published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* under date of June 30, 1936, and will be brought to the attention of the faithful in detail in the diocesan papers. As has been said, the choice of the day is left to the Most Reverend Bishops. In Latin countries the Thursday will probably be preferred. Thus in Italy we have "La Giornata Sacerdotale," in Spain "El Jueves Sacerdotal," in France it may be "La Journee Sacerdotale." In England, too, at the wish of His Excellency the Most Reverend Archbishop Hinsley of Westminster, Thursday was chosen and received the name of Priest's Thursday. All who take to heart the practice and spread of the devotion are guided by these sentiments of our Holy Father, Pope Pius XI: "Let us beg God that He may give us holy priests! If we have this, all else will follow; but if this be wanting, all else will avail nothing." And all likewise see that this pious practice is most timely. The priest must be able to fulfil his arduous duties also in our own day and in all lands, and he will be able to do so if he is a priest after the Heart of God. To such a one apply the words: "Say not: I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee: and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their presence: for I am with thee."—But even more than through the power of his words will the holy priest accomplish through the might

of his good example. Be he friend or foe, deep in his heart no one can help respecting such a priest. Let us, therefore, pray with the Savior: *Sanctifica eos in veritate*—"Sanctify them in truth!"

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## INDULGENCES FOR PRIEST'S SATURDAY

The following official decree, which we have translated from Latin into English, will be of great interest to those who observe the pious practice of Priest's Saturday and to all promoters thereof.

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The Sacred Penitentiary Apostolic,  
Office of Indulgences

Most Holy Father:

The Superior General of the Society of the Divine Savior, prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, humbly submits the following. The said Society began to promote the pious practice of praying for the sanctification of the clergy, namely, the devout custom of offering to God on a fixed day every month Mass and Communion as well as all the prayers of the same day and all good works whatsoever for the priests and levites of the Catholic Church. For the attainment of more abundant spiritual fruits from this pious practice, the petitioner earnestly requests, in favor of the faithful who, either privately or in common in some church or oratory, perform the said pious exercise, the Indulgences which follow, to be gained under the usual conditions: I. *Plenary* on the first Thursday or the first Saturday of each month, on Holy Thursday, on the feast of the Blessed



Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles, and on the feasts of the Holy Apostles; 2. *Partial* of seven years on other days of the year on which the same pious practice is performed. He also asks for a *Partial Indulgence of three hundred days* to be gained by the faithful who with at least a contrite heart and devoutly recite the invocation: "Jesus, Savior of the world, sanctify Thy priests and levites."

*Et Deus, etc.*

December 15, 1936.

The Sacred Penitentiary Apostolic, in virtue of faculties granted to it by His Holiness Pope Pius XI, graciously grants in perpetuity the favor requested in the petitions and that without any issuance of Apostolic Letters in brief form. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding in the least.

De mandato Emi.

S. Rossi, Secretarius

S. Luzio Regens

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### Concerning the Votive Mass

Regarding the votive Mass of Christ, the Supreme and Eternal Priest, to which reference is made at the top of page 11 of this booklet, the following is to be noted (Cf. A. A. S., Feb. 20, 1937, p. 35): 1. Gloria and Credo are to be said. 2. When this Mass is impeded by a feast of superior rite, namely by a double of the first or second class, in place of the impeded Mass one may make a commemoration of the same under one conclusion with the first oration of the feast, if a feast of our Lord Jesus Christ or its Octave does not occur. 3. White color is to be used.

## A FRANCISCAN LOOKS AT PRIEST'S SATURDAY

*Read the following scholarly exposition of the subject by Father Sebastian Erbacher, O. F. M.*

Holy priests are the most urgent need of the hour. Opportunities for spiritual good are more numerous today than ever before. The world-wide economic and political unrest is but the covering of a deep-seated hunger after the higher things of life, of a yearning for the lasting and satisfying values of the soul. Only a whole-hearted return to God and His law, to Christ and His Gospel, will bring universal peace to the war-conscious nations of the earth. Priests are the ministers of this Gospel, the ambassadors of Christ, the interpreters of the divine law to the people.

Pope Pius XI has written beautifully and forcibly of the dignity, the power, the responsibility of the Catholic priesthood in his encyclical of December 20, 1935. Repeatedly the Holy Father stresses the necessity of sanctity in the priest. He tells us: "It is quite true that so holy an office demands holiness in him who holds it. A priest should have a loftiness of spirit, a purity of heart and a sanctity of life befitting the solemnity and holiness of the office he holds. . . . The priest must, therefore, approach as close as possible to the perfection of Him whose vicar he is, and render himself ever more and more pleasing to God, by the sanctity of his life and of his deeds; because more than the scent of incense, or the beauty of churches and altars, God loves and accepts holiness." (*The Catholic Mind*, XXXIV [February 8, 1936], pp 52-53.) Toward the

end of this letter the Holy Father says: "If, however, your work is to be blessed by God and produce abundant fruit, it must be rooted in holiness of life. Sanctity, as We said above, is the chief and most important endowment of the Catholic priest. Without it other gifts will not go far; with it, even supposing other gifts be meager, the priest can work marvels." (Ibid., p. 76.)

Some time before he wrote his encyclical on the Catholic priesthood Pope Pius XI is reported to have said: "God in Heaven and I on earth, we desire nothing more than prayer and sacrifice for priests . . . . Let us beg God to send us holy priests. If we have these, everything else will follow; but if these are wanting, nothing else will help." (*Die Schildwache*, 23 [February 2, 1935], p. 142.) Whenever the Holy Father considers the welfare and the needs of the Church at large he directs his attention to priests and clerical students. He wrote his letter on the priesthood as a mark of his loving interest in priests and their work; to assist the faithful to appreciate more fully the sublimity of the sacerdotal office; "above all, that those who are themselves called may have still deeper understanding and esteem of their vocation." (*The Catholic Mind*, XXXIV [February 8, 1936], p. 42.)

Priests are commissioned by Christ to be "the salt of the earth" (Mt., 5:13) and "the light of the world" (ib., 5:14). Next to God the salvation of men depends upon them. As clerics they have cast their lot with the Lord. Consecrated to the sole service of God, priests must devote their whole life, all their talents and energy, to the promotion of the glory of God

and the good of souls in that part of the vineyard of the Lord to which obedience has assigned them. Priests have not so much chosen Christ, as Christ has chosen them. The Holy Father's letter calls attention to the definition of the priest as given by St. Paul: "For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Hebr., 5:1). (Op. cit., p. 44.) These "things that appertain to God" require the various virtues mentioned by the Holy Father in the second part of his letter.

By his very calling the priest is obliged to lead a life of Christian perfection. This duty has been instilled into his mind and heart during his seminary days. On the day of his ordination and on the day of his first solemn Mass he was possessed by the strong desire to become a holy priest of God. No matter how far he may stray from the path of priestly perfection, he cannot efface from his conscience the feeling of guilt because he is not striving to be a saint.

The faithful know that the priest must be holy. To them the "things that appertain to God" are sacred and demand sanctity on the part of the ministers to whose care they are entrusted. They admire, they love, they obey a saintly priest. The mere preaching of the doctrines of Christ and the Church will not bring about a more intimate relationship between the law of God and the individual conscience of the people. Men and women wish to see their religion lived first of all by the priests who preach the faith. Like Jesus who "began to do and to teach" (Acts, 1:1),

His priests must make the Gospel of Christ known and loved and lived first by example then by word of mouth. Today as ever before the power of the priest lies in his holiness of life, and not in any other natural equipment or personal achievement.

Although "ordained for men in the things that appertain to God," the priest is nevertheless "taken from among men." He is frail and subject to all the weaknesses of human nature as the remainder of men. The priest is well aware of this fact, and the good lay people make due allowance for it. Religious priests enjoy a greater degree of protection against the distracting influences of the modern world than the secular priests, who live in the very midst of its corrupting atmosphere. All priests, however, religious and secular, are in need of the grace of God to persevere in their holy vocation. For this reason the Holy Father toward the end of his encyclical urges the priests to be faithful to the "spiritual exercises" and adds: "It is not enough to withdraw to the sacred seclusion of the Spiritual Exercises only at the intervals and in the exact measure prescribed by ecclesiastical law but you should enter into retreat more often and for longer periods, as far as possible to you, and you should consecrate, in addition, a day of each month to more fervent prayer and greater recollection, according to the practice of priests of great zeal." (Ib., p. 77.)

Priests need prayer. Before Jesus chose His apostles He prayed. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God. And when day was come, he

called unto him his disciples: and he chose twelve of them (whom also he named apostles)." (Luke, 6:13, 14.) How touching are the words which Jesus addressed to Peter after the last supper. "And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke, 22:31, 32). No doubt Peter often recalled the words: "Simon, I have prayed for thee." What an inspiration and a source of strength this assurance of the prayer of Jesus must have been to the prince of the Apostles. The priests of today are no less fortunate. When Jesus prayed for the disciples at the last supper He also prayed for them. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me: because they are thine" (Jn., 18:9). Again Jesus said: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we also are" (ib., v. 11)." It is holiness above all that Jesus asks of His heavenly Father for His disciples, for His priests: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (Ib., vv. 15, 19).

Who, next to Jesus, was more interested in the holiness of the apostles and the disciples of Christ than His Blessed Mother Mary? St. John concludes his gospel with these words:



“But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written” (21:25). Is it too farfetched to believe that one of these unwritten things is Christ’s recommendation of His disciples to the constant prayer of Mary His Mother? Under the cross of Jesus stood the mother of the Savior and the disciple whom He loved. “He saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own” (Jn., 19:26, 27). What a consolation the Mother of God must have been to the apostles in their early struggles against Judaism and Paganism; what a source of courage and comfort the prayers of Mary must have been in their sufferings and trials. The “Queen of the Apostles” became the “Regina Cleri,” the “Queen of the Clergy.” The Holy Father pleads for true piety in the priest: “This piety should primarily be directed towards God our Father in Heaven; yet it should be extended also to the Mother of God. The priest even more than the faithful should have devotion to Our Lady, for the relation of the priest to Christ is more deeply and truly like that which Mary bears to her Divine Son.” (*The Catholic Mind*, XXXIV [February 8, 1936], p. 56.)

Mary, the Queen of the Clergy, has become the center of a new movement to foster the prayers of the faithful for the sanctification of the priesthood. This movement is known as *Priest’s Saturday*. It originated in Germany, has the approval of the Holy Father, and is

supported by the Bishops of Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, France, Switzerland, and other countries. The first Saturday of the month, following upon the first Friday, is dedicated to the priesthood. The faithful offer all their prayers and good works of the entire day, their sacrifices, Masses, communions, sufferings, and joys, through the pure hands of Mary, the Mother of Priests, to Jesus, the "Supreme and Eternal Priest," for the sanctification of priests and candidates for the priesthood. Parishioners are asked to pray especially for their parish clergy. If Jesus prayed for His apostles; if the Mother of God prayed for them; why should not our Catholic people pray for their successors, the Pope, the Bishops, and the priests?

The first *Priest's Saturday* was established in the cathedral of St. Hedwig in Berlin, on September 8, 1934, by Dr. Nicholas Bares, Bishop of that city, who died on March 1, 1935. God chose a little child, Bertl Baumann, lame all her life, to announce this far reaching apostolate to the modern world. A victim of her powerful idea, she was called into eternity by the Eternal High Priest on the feast of the Purification of Mary, 1935, her first *Priest's Saturday*, as she had requested of almighty God. Before departing from this life as a victim for priests, she beheld in a vision crowds of God's anointed in glory. Immediately after her death she began her mission for the salvation of priests. The Salvatorian Fathers suggested the idea of a *Priest's Saturday* to Bishop Bares, and met with a hearty approval. He told them: "I am in sympathy with the thoughts expressed in this movement, because to me the

sanctification of our priests appears to be the indispensable condition for the sanctification and renewal of the world." He was the first bishop to approve and recommend the movement. "With great joy," he said, "I greet this salutary thought of a *Priest's Saturday*, for if a holy priest is the greatest gift of heaven to earth, then the pleading of the faithful in prayer and sacrifice for holy priests will be the most beautiful gift of earth to heaven. With this apostolate so pleasing to God we in our own way work at the realization of the prayer of the Eternal High Priest and His Blessed Mother, the Queen of the Clergy, that the Church may shine with a deeply believing, humble, and strong priesthood, so much needed and desired in these grave times. Therefore I recommend and bless this work most cordially."

On November 21, 1934, the feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple, the General of the Salvatorians, P. Pancratius Pfeiffer, in a private audience with the Pope, presented the idea of the *Priest's Saturday* to His Holiness, Pius XI. The Holy Father was very favorably impressed and said in conclusion: "We heartily praise and bless the work; we repeat: the idea pleases Us very much: We heartily praise and bless it."

A few days after the death of Bertha Baumann Bishop Bares said in an address: "Christian people, you know it. You stand with your priests. And I say to you: You also fall with your priests. Therefore, pray and make sacrifices for them." In his letters to his friends and penitents he always added the final petition: "Oremus pro invicem"—"Let us pray for each other." The idea of praying and doing penance

for poor fallen priests made a strong appeal to him. He said: "That is fine. Whoever observes *Priest's Saturday*, may and should know, that the golden plate marked 'The Holy of the Lord' can drop to the ground from the forehead of the priest." (Cf. *Exodus*, 39:29, and *Leviticus*, 8:9.) It was he who wrote the words in the Offering to be made on *Priest's Saturday*, asking Mary with the loving hand of a Mother to lead back to the Good Shepherd those poor priests who have become unfaithful to their sublime calling and have gone astray.

A wide field for Catholic Action opens before us in this recent movement to foster a closer union between the clergy and the laity by means of prayer and sacrifice. It is built upon the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. St. Paul says: "Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member" (1 Cor., 12:27). This apostolate of prayer for priests will unite the people with their spiritual leaders, the bishops and priests. With St. Paul the latter implore the former: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me in your prayers for me to God" (Rom., 15:30). The Queen of angels and saints will undoubtedly enlist the help of her great following in heaven in her endeavor to further the cause of holiness among priests, and what the Poor Souls in Purgatory, above all the souls of priests, can do for the movement is known to God alone.

*Priest's Saturday* will appeal to the aged and the sick, the many shut-ins, who often feel as if their lives were useless. Their prayers and sufferings will become a mighty force for good in the Church of God. Together with the

children these chosen souls will form the second line of defense in the battle of the Church against the enemies of salvation. Not all can go to the front and fight in the ranks; the majority must remain at home and help furnish the supplies and the weapons used in the first line of defense. Religious actively engaged will be glad to join their sisters behind cloister walls in emulating the Little Flower of Jesus in her work for priests. The most ardent enthusiasts for this movement ought be the priests themselves, the very beneficiaries of the apostolate for apostles. "Oremus pro invicem" should be their slogan for *Priest's Saturday*. In one of his jubilee sermons Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich cried out: "Who in all the world should be willing to make sacrifices, if not the priests, who daily ascend the altar of sacrifice and kiss the relics of the martyrs in the sepulchre of the altar-stone?" (Cf. Pfarrer, Dr. Franzmathes, "Ubung priesterlicher Heiligung," *Sanctificatio Nostra*, VI [Juni 1936], pp. 262-265.) The Holy Father expects the priest to be a leader of his people in "that crusade of expiation and penance to which We have invited all men of good will. For there is need of reparation for the blasphemies, wickedness and crimes which dishonor humanity today, an age perhaps unparalleled in its need for the mercy and pardon of God." (*The Catholic Mind*, XXXIV [February 8, 1936], p. 43.)

Mary, the Mother of the Priest of priests, to whom so many priests owe their very vocation, cannot be indifferent to the pleadings of the faithful. What a change this movement to foster sanctity among priests and clerical students, will produce, once it becomes wide-

spread in America as it is in certain countries of Europe today. If priests and the candidates for the sacred ministry take an active part in this crusade, not only by making it known and encouraging it among the laity, but by adding their own prayers and sacrifices for one another, the drive for greater sanctity among priests will produce untold good in an abundant harvest of souls. There have been some individual efforts in this direction in the United States, but as yet the movement has not been launched on a national scale. Who is interested in making holiness of priests a national issue?

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Up to January 1, 1938, over 750,000 pieces of literature on Priest's Saturday were distributed, on request, by the Publishing Department at St. Nazianz, Wis.,—an indication of the extraordinary interest taken in this movement by our Catholic people everywhere.

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Going Therefore  
Teach<sup>ye</sup> all Nations