

The second of our prayers for priests refers, as in the first, to Christ as being the Eternal High Priest, one who offered up His life to His Heavenly Father for our salvation in His Passion and continues to offer Himself up for us at Mass, in an “unbloody” manner:

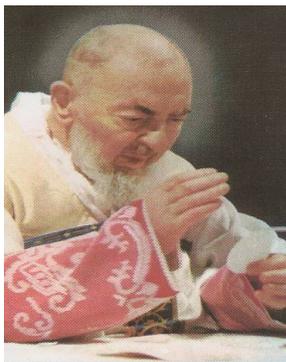
**O Jesus, Eternal Priest, look down with love upon Thy priests. Fill them with burning zeal for the conversion of sinners. Keep them within the shelter of Thy Sacred Heart. Keep unstained their anointed hands which daily touch Thy Sacred Body. Keep unsullied their lips purpled with Thy precious Blood. Keep pure and unearthly their hearts sealed with the sublime marks of Thy glorious Priesthood. Let Thy holy love protect them from the world’s contagion. Bless their labors with abundant fruit, and may the souls to whom they minister on earth be one day their joy and consolation in heaven.**

**Amen**

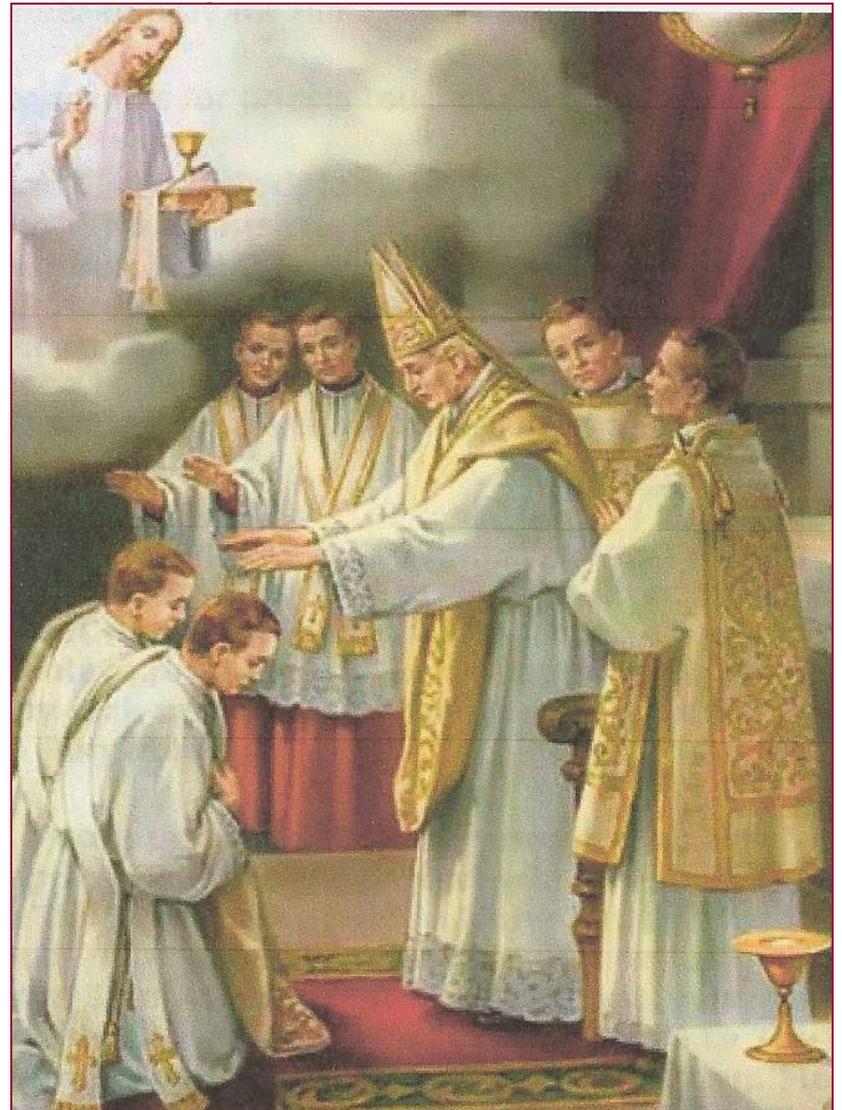
St. John Vianney once called the priesthood “the love of the heart of Jesus.” Keep Jesus close to your heart as well, and to seek out his grace in prayer and in the sacraments. **Remember**, who **He** has chosen to give them to us:

**His Priests!**

\*(excerpted from [www.ourcatholicprayers.com](http://www.ourcatholicprayers.com))



## PRAYERS FOR PRIESTS



## Our Priests

*\*Why say prayers for priests? Because, as St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, once said “After God, the priest is everything.” (He also once referred to the priest “the steward of the good God, the distributor of His wealth.”)*

*In administering the sacraments (which only they can do) and serving us, priests act, as we say, in persona Christi (that is to say, in the person of Christ), with our Lord working through their presence.*

*The sacraments are seven outward signs Christ instituted to give us grace, a supernatural gift from God to enable us to grow in goodness and holiness. These are: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.*

*As Father John Hardon, S.J., once said, “praying and offering God sacrifices for the priesthood are indispensably important,” because “there is no Catholic Church without the priesthood.”*

*The first of our prayers for priests touches on this:*

***O Almighty and Eternal God, look upon the Face of Thy Christ, and for love of Him Who is the eternal High-priest, have pity on Thy priests. Remember, O most compassionate God, that they are but weak and frail human beings. Stir up in them the grace of their vocation which is in them by the imposition of the Bishop’s hands. Keep them close to Thee, lest the enemy prevail against them, so that they may never do anything in the slightest degree unworthy of their sublime vocation.***

***O Jesus, I pray Thee for Thy faithful and fervent priests; for Thy unfaithful and tepid priests; for Thy priests laboring at home or abroad in distant mission fields; for Thy tempted priests; for Thy lonely and desolate priests; for Thy young priests; for Thy aged priests; for Thy sick priests; for Thy dying priests; for the souls of Thy priests in Purgatory.***

***But above all I commend to Thee the priests dearest to me: the priest who baptized me; the priests at whose Masses I assisted and who gave me Thy Body and Blood in Holy Communion; the priests who taught and instructed or helped me and encouraged me; all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way, particularly (your priests name here). O Jesus, keep them all close to Thy heart, and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. Amen.***

***Mary, Queen of the clergy, pray for us;  
obtain for us many and holy priests. Amen.***

*In admirable support for his “Brother Priests,” as he called them, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed a “Year for Priests” from June 19, 2009 - June 19th 2010.*

*In a subsequent homily, he asked for many prayers for priests and for an increase of priestly vocations, reminding his audience that “the priest is a man totally belonging to the Lord, because it is God himself who calls him and who establishes him in his apostolic service. And precisely being totally of God, he is totally of mankind, for all people.”*

*Angels may watch over us and guide us but it is only our priests and bishops who can give us the sacraments, the foundations of Christ’s Church and our faith. The previous prayer reminds us in part of just how much priests do for us!*

*In instituting the Catholic priesthood, Christ gave his apostles, and those whom they would appoint to subsequently appoint others, the power to summon Him down upon the altar, in body, blood, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist at Mass. None of us in the laity can do this. Neither can the ministers among our Christian brethren of other denominations!*

*Only an ordained priest or bishop, consecrated through the Sacrament of Holy Orders can perform this vital, sacred task! As St. John Vianney expressed it so movingly, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, when the priest says the words of consecration “Our Lord comes down from heaven at his voice and shuts Himself up in a little Host,” (the wafer that then becomes the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ)!*

*Christ also gave priests the power to forgive sins **in His name** in the sacrament of Penance after His resurrection, when he told his disciples “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained” (John 20:22-23).*

*Our Holy Father once referred to this most powerful sacrament as “an extraordinary source of serenity and peace.” He also stated in his letter, mentioned earlier, that “priests ought never to be resigned to empty confessionals or the apparent indifference of the faithful to this sacrament.”*

*Grace is what counts here: grace given us by the priests in the person of Christ in all the sacraments. Let us all pray that our priests be inspired by the Holy Spirit to radiate Christ’s grace and, thus, His love for us, so that we might do the same for each other!*