

# [ARKBLOG – LAY FAST FOR PRIESTS](#)

## [HOW IT BEGAN](#)

By Anna Rae-Kelly, September 1, 2011 at 8:01 AM · Filed under [Lay Fast For Priests](#) · [Edit](#)

Seven years ago, Catholics in Boston, U.S.A were deeply wounded by the unfolding news of the priest abuse scandal. The suffering of the victims of the actions of a few priests was profound. The impact on the faith of the People of God could not be measured. Like multitudes of my Catholic sisters and brothers, I was drawn to pray because I had gradually begun to recognize the terrible consequence of any public sin by any member of the ordained, Catholic priesthood.

When we, the faithful arrive to attend Mass, and if there were no priest present, we could not receive the Most Holy Eucharist, the Bread of Angels, the Source and Summit of Catholic life. We would spiritually starve.

When we come to Church to approach God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and if the confessional were to be empty of a priest, we could not hear those beautiful and life-giving words, “Go! I absolve you from your sins. You are forgiven”.

And at the end of our lives, when we are about to depart from this place of time, it will be a priest who will administer the Last Rites. It will be the priest’s voice that will walk us into eternity. At that time of great spiritual danger, and without a priest, our souls would go forward alone.

The gift of those men whom God calls to a sacrificial life of priesthood is indeed a great and mysterious one. And it is one that requires the power of daily prayer from every Catholic lay person for without a priest, we would have no Eucharist, no Sacrament of Reconciliation, no-one to administer the Last Rites at the end of this, our earthly journey.

Satan hates the Sacraments of our Lord, Jesus Christ because through them Christ is present in His Humanity and Divinity here on earth. We are given life in Him and through Him. Through the Most Holy Eucharist, Heaven opens and all earth trembles, the world vibrates. When the priest speaks the words of the Consecration, hosts of angels prostrate themselves before him as he holds high the Savior God of all. At that moment, the priest is God the Father’s Christ. He told St. Catherine of Siena that we should never judge a priest because He Himself will judge him terribly at the end of his life. So what are we to do if we see a priest sinning in a most dreadful and public way against innocents? Through Catherine, the Father asks us to think of what we would do if ” a filthy and badly dressed person brought us a great Treasure from which we obtained life? We would surely not hate the bearer, however ragged and filthy he might be, through love of the Treasure and of the Lord Who sent it? His state would indeed displease us and we would be anxious through love of his Master that he should be cleansed and properly clothed. You should pray for them out of love and reverence for the authority which I have given them.”

This then is our duty and it thus that the Father asks us to act with regard to badly ordered priests who have separated themselves from Him, “through filthy behavior and vice.” They bring to us the Body and Blood of the Father’s only Son, the greatest Treasure of all. The Father reminds us that the sins of priests should indeed displease us and that we should hate those sins. He asks us, still through His daughter St. Catherine to strive with love and holy prayer to re-clothe His priests, washing away their foulness with our tears because it is not the Father’s will that any of His sons should,

“fouly live in dishonor, stripped of their garment of virtue. If they do not accept the breadth of My mercy, I, the Supreme Judge, shall terribly condemn them at their last extremity and they will be sent to eternal fire”. (The Dialogue of St.Catherine of Siena.)

As I pondered on these instructions from our Father those seven years ago, I decided that I would follow the suggestion of Pope John Paul 11. He taught us that fasting is the most powerful force in human history. Fasting is praying with the body and with both of these thoughts in mind, I offered fasts for our priests, without whom we lay faithful would have no Treasure, the Most Holy Eucharist. By working on the weaknesses of those men called to priesthood, it seemed to me that the devil had planned a highly strategized war against the Lord, present in the Eucharist. If he could cause a priest to fall from grace, not only would there be one less Christ on earth but thousands of Catholics might also question their faith in a Church that would seem to protect such evil actions. And they would stop attending Mass, stop receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, stop bending the knee in humility at the Sacrament of Reconciliation and it might be his own demons that would escort a soul from time into eternity. Satan seemed to have won some major victories through the temptation and fall of priests during and in the months following that scandal. But the gates of hell will not prevail against the Bride of Christ, His one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Several months passed and as I continued to fast and ask advice from our Blessed Mother, I began to be niggled by the fact that I was only one person. I knew that millions of my brothers and sisters in this, our Church Militant would also be praying their way through such grievous and dangerous times for the Catholic Church but perhaps our power would be greater against the evil one if we were overtly united in our prayer. And so I approached the Director of the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette. My family and I are blessed indeed to live close to that beautiful home of our Blessed Mother. I asked Brother Bob Russell if it would be possible for me to be permitted to invite the pilgrims to join me in a fast for priests on the 3rd Saturday of that October. He explained that I should first seek permission from our Bishop. Our dear Bishop Coleman quickly gave his blessing.

That Sunday, just at the closing of Holy Mass, I waited to go forward to invite those present to join me in this first day of the Lay Fast for Priests. A man asked me what I was about to do. I explained. He suggested that I was wasting my time because.....”Americans don’t fast”, he said.

That day, 202 people signed up to fast for the protection of the souls of priests who give us the Holy Eucharist and to ask Our Lady to bless us with many more good and holy priests whose hearts are “on fire for the Lord”. (St. Therese of Lisieux)

Our little effort has been taken by the Holy Spirit, Spouse of Mary and has blazed across the world. On the 3rd Saturday of every October, hundreds of thousands of people, from China and Japan, all across Europe, into the Americas fast together from dawn until 3pm.....the hour of the death of the Savior. We fast from food or TV or talking or the internet or whatever we can that would involve a little sacrifice which we place at the feet of Our Mother, to give to her Most Holy Spouse, in praise of the Father Who gives us His Son in the Eucharist at the hands of His priests, Ipse Christus.

“And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18).

Please join this great and mighty army of fasters this year as we fight the spiritual warfare that is waged against our Savior, present in Sacraments of our Catholic Church. We have a Queen out front leading our battle lines and we are strengthened and guided by the Spirit of the Living God as we “put on the armor of God” (Ephesians 6:11) and give deep glory to our Father.