

LAY FAST FOR PRIESTS - INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

(Dear Parish Contact - to be read with permission from priest at Sunday Masses in week(s) leading up to 22nd October 2011. Thank you.)

Please come back in time with me to one hour ago. You and I are arriving as members of the body of Christ to rejoice with one another, to receive our God. But there is no priest here – and as a result we cannot and do not receive Holy Communion.

Let's go forward in time when we need to be reconciled with God through the Sacrament of Penance – but there is no priest – the confessional sits empty.

At the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it is the priest who lends his voice to Christ and we hear our God say to us "Go, your sins are forgiven."

At the very end of our lives, it will be the priest who lends his voice to Christ and in the Last Rite of the Church we will hear the Lord pardon us. It will be the priest at that appointed time who lends his hands to Christ as he lovingly anoints us and sends us on our final journey. It is the Priest's voice that walks us into eternity.

Without priests, we would have no Eucharist, no Sacrament of Reconciliation, no-one to administer the Last Rites. The sacrament of Holy Orders equips the priest to lend our Lord his voice, his hands, his whole being. This alone is the source of the priest's "incomparable dignity".

At the launch of the 2009 Year for Priests, Pope Benedict said that there have been situations involving priests worldwide that can never be sufficiently deplored. But the majority of our priests have humbly and silently accepted the burden for those few of their brothers in Christ whose actions have deeply wounded the Body of the Lord. It is these priests who have been their brother's keepers, who have been ridiculed, shouted at in airports, insulted in malls that we, lay people from all over the world, will offer to our Blessed Lady's care and protection on **Saturday, October 22, 2011**. Fasting is praying with the body and on October 22nd, a Fast will be held for our priests, for their Spirituality, their needs, the sacrifice of their lives which they daily offer for us.

Will you join us in this Lay Fast for Priests? Will you storm Heaven with us for a healing of all the wounds and wounded, for our priests here and worldwide and for many, many more men to hear and respond to the Lord's call to become "His Christs" on Earth? People will be fasting with you on the 22nd of October from all over Australia and Japan, across Europe, through the Americas and all the way to Hawaii. If you would like to join the army of fasters, you will find an information sheet and a sign up sheet at the back of the Church (or in the bulletin or online).

There is a list of suggestions and ways to fast on the information sheet. It doesn't have to be only from food. If you decide to make this offering to Our Lady, just begin your fast with a prayer when you waken up, say a brief private prayer as you go about your day and then end your fast with a final prayer at 3PM, the Hour of the Lord's death. And the Lord will not be outdone in generosity for your magnificent sacrifice for His sons on Earth.

