

Blessed Juan Maria de la Cruz



“Happy are those who are fortunate enough to shed their blood for our Lord!”

Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Beatification of Blessed Juan Maria de la Cruz

Introduction¹

Father of goodness, today we come before You with hearts overflowing with gratitude as we celebrate **the 25th anniversary** since the Church confirmed, through beatification, the holiness and witness of our brother, **Blessed Juan Maria de la Cruz**.

We thank You, Lord, for his life offered. In him You gave us an example of what it means to live "with the Heart open": **Thank You** for his unwavering faith, which did not falter in the face of



persecution. **Thank You** for his love of the Eucharist and his generous dedication to those most in need. **Thank You** for his final "Yes," uniting his sacrifice to that of Christ on the Cross for the salvation of the world.

Lord, may the memory of that **March 11, 2001**, when his name was proclaimed among the blessed, not be just a date on the calendar, but a spark that rekindles our apostolic zeal.

We ask you, through his intercession: to renew in us the desire to be **prophets of love and servants of reconciliation**; to strengthen the Dehonian Family and all those who seek to live according to the Heart of your Son; to grant us the courage to be witnesses of your Kingdom amid the challenges of our time.

May the example of Blessed John Mary guide us so that, like him, we may say at all times: *"Thy Kingdom come!"*.

Blessed Juan Maria de la Cruz, pray for us.

¹ We celebrate the 25th anniversary of the beatification of the Dehonian religious Juan María de la Cruz. Pope John Paul II beatified him in Rome on March 11, 2001, together with 232 Spanish martyrs, for giving their lives for Jesus Christ. We remember our Blessed, protector of Dehonian vocations, as a tireless seeker of God's will who never renounced his deepest convictions. His life and death are an example for all to follow.

Prayer of Surrender and Reparation²

“My Lord and my God, I accept from your hand, with patience and love, whatever kind of life or death you wish to send me, with all its anxieties, sorrows, and pains, as a tribute of adoration and reparation to your Divine Majesty. O Jesus, who out of love for us offered Yourself as a victim on the Cross, I too desire to offer myself to You. I want my life to be a constant immolation of love and sacrifice for the salvation of souls and for the sanctification of priests. Heart of Jesus, I trust in You”.

Gospel: John 12:24-26

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be; whoever serves me, the Father will honor him”

Psalms 23: The Lord is my shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters and restores my soul;
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil, for you are with me:
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me,
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil,
and my cup overflows.

² Blessed Juan María de la Cruz (Mariano García Méndez), the first martyr of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians), is remembered for his profound spirituality of reparation and dedication. Although his life was a testimony of silence and sacrifice, a **prayer of offering** has been preserved that perfectly sums up his charism and his willingness to martyrdom. This prayer reflects his union with the Heart of Jesus.

Your goodness and mercy follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
for years to come.

Meditation and personal reflection

Blessed Juan Maria de la Cruz was martyred in 1936. It is said that, when he was taken to be shot, his attitude was not one of resentment, but of absolute peace. His writings and prayers often focus on:

- **Reparation: Spirit of Reparation (Spiritual Exercises, Rome 1927).**

“But if a soul loves God and takes pleasure in him, it cannot help but love and take pleasure in his living image, which is the neighbor, that is, souls. And from this love will follow, as a logical consequence, zeal for the salvation of souls, which are among the most cherished interests of the Heart of Jesus. And seeing the horrendous ravages that sin wreaks on souls, it will consecrate itself with all its strength, **carried on the wings of love for its God and neighbor**, according to the direction of holy obedience, whether in missions, in schools, in propaganda, in the pulpit, in the confessional, in magazines or books, in Catholic social action, in the catechesis of children, at the bedside of the sick, through the apostolate of prayer, and will not miss any opportunity to do whatever good it can for poor souls, snatching as many as possible from the clutches of Satan, freeing them from the slavery of sin and vice, and guiding them along the difficult paths of perfection”.

- **Availability: Personal Meditations in the Novitiate 1925-26**

“I expect everything from you, after God. I place in your hands the interests of my poor soul, which are none other than the interests of Jesus. I firmly hope that this month, my Mother, my soul will run and fly along the paths of virtue and sanctification, carried on the wings of your love, in your maternal arms. I hope that you will cure it of all its illnesses and ailments, that you will unite me more and more to the Heart of Jesus Christ, that you will make me humble, obedient, pure and chaste, devout, with the gift of prayer, prudent, collected, docile, modest, charitable, affable, discreet, holy freedom and largeness of heart, peaceful, joyful, penitent, industrious, mortified, constant, methodical, etc. I hope, my Mother, that you will grant me perseverance in my vocation and final perseverance. I hope from you, my Mother, reparation in every way and victory over myself, an ardent love for Jesus and for you, together with your most holy spouse St. Joseph, and a great zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls”.

- Love of Neighbor: Resolutions and thoughts for the 1912-13 academic year

“I must also try to be very patient and mortified during this course. Patient and resigned to God’s will in everything, such as illnesses, work, trials, disappointments, sadness, etc., whether the suffering comes directly from God or from my neighbor; but trying to suffer everything with a spirit of contrition above all, that is, for divine love, and also thinking that everything is nothing compared to what I owe, and also thinking that the more generous I am with my God, the more generous He will be with me. And to consider the work that God sends me as a gift from God”.

Petitions

Jesus tells us that “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one’s friends”. This is what our Blessed simply did. Following his example, on this day of thanksgiving for the life and witness of our Blessed Juan Maria de la Cruz, we present our petitions to you.

- For the Church and Christian communities. That we may not be content with a faith of words, but may have the courage to give our lives in daily service, being living reflections of God’s love. *Let us pray to the Lord.*
- For the Superior General and all our superiors. That their authority may always be an exercise of generous dedication and humility, remembering that the greatest is the one who becomes the servant of all. *Let us pray to the Lord.*
- For the missionaries and volunteers of the Dehonian Family: For those who have left their comfort zone to give their time and health in the most difficult places, that their witness may be a seed of hope for the world. *Let us pray to the Lord.*
- For those who suffer for their faith: May their strength in giving their lives for the Gospel inspire us to be more consistent, courageous, and generous in our small daily decisions. *Let us pray to the Lord.*
- For those who live closed in selfishness: That the Holy Spirit may open their hearts and help them discover the deep joy that comes from giving themselves to others without expecting anything in return. *Let us pray to the Lord.*
- For us, Dehonian religious: That we may learn to see in our brothers and sisters in need not a burden, but an opportunity to love with deeds and to witness our faith through charity. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

- For peace in the world: May the sacrifice of those who work for justice overcome hatred, demonstrating that self-giving love is the only force capable of transforming history. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

Our Father

Final Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord God, Father of all goodness, we thank you for the gift of life and the dedication of **Blessed Juan Maria de la Cruz.** We praise you for giving him the strength to be a courageous witness to your love, even in the midst of persecution and sacrifice.

We thank You, Lord, because in his life we see reflected the **Heart of Christ:** a heart pierced, but open and generous. We ask you that, inspired by his example of absolute fidelity and his love for the Eucharist, we too may offer our daily lives as a living oblation for your glory and the good of our brothers and sisters.

May his intercession obtain for us the grace to live with a “prophetic heart” and an unreserved dedication to the “service of reconciliation”, so that the Kingdom of your Son’s Heart may spread throughout the world.

Amen.

