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PRAYERS FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH
AND THE
LEONINE PRAYERS

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From the General Introduction

These papers, commissioned by the International Federation *Una Voce*, are offered to stimulate and inform debate about the 1962 Missal among Catholics ‘attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition’, and others interested in the liturgical renewal of the Church. They are not to be taken to imply personal or moral criticism of those today or in the past who have adopted practices or advocated reforms which are subjected to criticism. In composing these papers we adopt the working assumption that our fellow Catholics act in good will, but that nevertheless a vigorous and well-informed debate is absolutely necessary if those who act in good will are to do so in light of a proper understanding of the issues.

The authors of the papers are not named, as the papers are not the product of any one person, and also because we prefer them to be judged on the basis of their content, not their authorship.

The International Federation *Una Voce* humbly submits the opinions contained in these papers to the judgement of the Church.

Prayers for the Persecuted Church and the Leonine Prayers: Abstract

In the context of the persecution of Christians around the world, and particularly in the Middle East, to which Pope Francis has frequently drawn attention, Catholics attached to the Extraordinary Form will naturally wish to make use of public and liturgical prayer to address this problem. The Middle Ages saw the widespread use of various versions of the ‘Holy Land Clamor’ for the liberation of the Holy Land for three centuries from 1188, and the Prayers After Low Mass (‘Leonine Prayers’) were introduced for another specific crisis, first by Pope Pius IX in 1859, and made universal, with adaptations, by Pope Leo XIII in 1884. The use of Votive Masses and Commemorations for persecuted Christians is to be commended; these can also be facilitated by the Holy See and local Ordinaries, by giving permission for them to be used on a larger number of days.

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1. This Position Paper responds to the heartfelt appeal of Pope Francis:

We are witnessing a phenomenon of terrorism of previously unimaginable dimensions. So many of our brothers and sisters are being persecuted and have had to leave their homes, even in a brutal manner. It seems that awareness of the value of human life has been lost. It seems that the person does not count and can be sacrificed for other interests. And all this, unfortunately, with the indifference of so many.

This unjust situation also requires, in addition to our constant prayer, an appropriate response on the part of the International Community. I am certain that, with the Lord's help, today's encounter will result in valid reflections and suggestions in order to help our brothers and sisters who are suffering and in order to face even the tragedy of reduced Christian presence in the land where Christianity was born and from which it spread.¹

The current persecution of Christians, which has been likened to a 'Global War on Christians',² is of particular gravity in the Middle East, but is also acute in parts of Africa and South East Asia.

2. As well as private prayer,³ Catholics attached to the Extraordinary Form will naturally wish to make use of public and liturgical prayer, the most perfect form of prayer ceaselessly offered to God by the whole Church. There are a number of options here, in relation to the Extraordinary Form, which need not be mutually exclusive.⁴

Precedents for the Leonine Prayers

3. An noteworthy phenomenon of the Medieval liturgy was the 'Holy Land *Clamor*' ('cry') for the liberation of the Holy Land, versions of which were initiated by local initiatives and by Papal mandate, following the Battle of Hattin in 1187 and continuing for three centuries.⁵ It took place immediately after the *Pax Domini* and before the *Pater Noster*, or else after the *Agnus Dei*; a version could also be said in the Office. It was composed of the psalm *Deus venerunt gentes*, with versicles and a collect. It was omitted on Feast Days. During the Middle Ages clamors existed for a number of intentions.

¹ Pope Francis Address to the Ordinary Public Consistory, 20th October 2014.

² John Allen *The Global War on Christians: dispatches from the front lines of anti-Christian persecution* (Image Books, 2014)

³ The Collect of the Commemoration 'For Holy Church Against Persecutors' was enriched with an indulgence for private recital in 1934: 'Graciously hear the prayers of Thy Church, we beseech Thee, O Lord: that her enemies and all heresies be brought to nought, and that she may serve Thee in perfect security and freedom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.' ('Ecclesiae tuae, quaesumus, Domine, preces placatus admitte: ut, destructis adversitatibus et erroribus universis, secura tibi serviat libertate. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.') This prayer is not included in the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* of 1968 or subsequent editions, which are very much shorter than their predecessors. Older collections of indulgenced prayers include a number of other suitable private prayers.

⁴ In England and Wales processions are authorised 'In time of war against enemies of Holy Church', with special prayers at their conclusion (see Appendix C).

⁵ The first recorded use of a form of this Clamor was in London in 1188. For a full discussion see Amnon Linder *Raising Arms: liturgy in the struggle to liberate Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003) pp1-95. For the two most widely used collects for the Holy Land Clamor, see Appendix D.

4. A longstanding precedent for adding prayers to the end of Mass are the Prayers for the Sovereign, *Domine salvum fac*, which continue to be said in certain countries after Mass.⁶

The History and Intentions of the Leonine Prayers

5. The Prayers After Low Mass (*Orationes post Missam*) or ‘Leonine Prayers’⁷ were first instituted by Pope Pius IX in 1859, for use in the Papal States. In their original form they comprised the Hail Mary (repeated three times), the Salve Regina, and four collects from the Roman Missal.⁸ The intention of the prayers was the preservation of the Papal States, whose remaining territories were in fact seized by the Kingdom of Italy in 1870.
6. Pope Leo XIII made the prayers universal in 1884, replacing the four collects with a newly composed collect, ‘in order to obtain the help of God needful in times of such difficulty and trial.’⁹ In 1886 this collect was substantially re-written, and to it was added the Prayer to St Michael. (A threefold invocation of the Sacred Heart was added by Pope St Pius X in 1904.)¹⁰
7. In this way Pope Leo widened the intention of the prayers, but the sense of necessary defence, for the Church and for her members, remained. The historical context of the prayers was the ‘Roman problem’ created by the loss of the Temporal Power. Following the creation of the Vatican City State in 1929, Pope Pius XI ordered (in 1930) that they henceforth be said ‘to permit the tranquillity and freedom to profess the faith to be restored to the afflicted people of Russia’,¹¹ an intention with continuing relevance.¹² This intention was reiterated by Pope Pius XII in 1952.¹³

⁶ In the countries where they are said, generally speaking Catholic monarchies but also England and Wales, they are said after the principal Mass on a Sunday, whether this is Low, Sung, or Solemn, led by the celebrant before he leaves the sanctuary.

⁷ Also, but less accurately, called the ‘Prayers for the Conversion of Russia’.

⁸ The four collects are given in Appendix A.

⁹ Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites (1884) *Iam inde*: ‘From the year 1859 Pope Pius IX, of holy memory, prescribed that in all the churches of the Papal States, certain prayers, to which he added indulgences, should be recited after the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in order to obtain the help of God needful in times of such difficulty and trial. And as the Catholic Church, surrounded by evils that are always grave (and which threaten imminently to become yet more grave) has so great a need of the special protection of God, our most holy Lord Pope Leo XIII has thought fit that these prayers, slightly altered in parts, should be recited throughout the whole world. That the prayer, in common of united Christendom, may implore from God that which concerns the good in common of Christianity, and that by an increase in the number of petitioners, the benefits of the Divine Mercy may be more easily obtained. Wherefore, by this present Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, his Holiness has commanded that for the future, in all churches of the City and of the Catholic world, the prayers that follow below, enriched with an indulgence of 300 days, shall be recited, kneeling, at the end of each Mass without music.’

¹⁰ See Appendix A.

¹¹ See Appendix B.

¹² Following the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, Bishop Bohdan Dzyurakh, secretary-general of the Ukrainian Catholic Synod of Bishops, commented to the *Catholic Herald* (8 Apr 2014) “Greek Catholic communities like ours are denied rights in the Russian Federation, which we see as a violation of freedom of conscience and religion... We hoped these restrictions wouldn’t be applied to our Church in Crimea, but we’ve been told all religious communities must now re-register there. This means the local government usurps the power to reject those it sees as a threat. After the recent ethnic cleansing, this will amount to religious cleansing.”

¹³ Pius XII Apostolic Letter *Sacro Vergente Anno* (1952) quotes Pope Pius XI on the intention of the Leonine Prayers, and comments: ‘We willingly confirm and renew this exhortation and this command, since the religious situation among you up to the present is certainly not improved, and since We are animated by the same most ardent affection and by the same concern for the peoples of Russia.’

8. When mandating them for universal use, Pope Leo reiterated that the prayers could be said in the vernacular. However, the task of translation was left to local ordinaries, with the result that small variations exist between, for example, different English and German versions used in different places.
9. In the rules in force in 1962, the Leonine Prayers may be omitted on certain occasions.¹⁴ They were abolished in 1964 by the Instruction *Inter Oecumenici* 14.
10. Pope St John Paul II commented on the Prayer to St Michael as follows:
 May prayer strengthen us for the spiritual battle that the Letter to the Ephesians speaks of: ‘Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might’ (Ephesians 6:10). The Book of Revelation refers to this same battle, recalling before our eyes *the image of St Michael the Archangel* (cf. Revelation 12:7). Pope Leo XIII certainly had this picture in mind when, at the end of the last century, he brought in, throughout the Church, a special prayer to St Michael: “Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil...” Although this prayer is no longer recited at the end of Mass, I ask everyone not to forget it and to recite it to obtain help in the battle against the forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world.¹⁵
 Pope Francis consecrated the Vatican City State to St Michael in 2013, requesting prayers to him to vanquish Satan.¹⁶
11. On 24th January 2012, Bishop Daniel Jenky, of Peoria in the United States of America, ordered that the Prayer to St Michael be said in the General Intercessions (Prayers of the Faithful, or Bidding Prayers) at Sunday Mass in his diocese, ‘for the freedom of the Catholic Church in America’, in the context of the problem created by the Affordable Care Act (2010).¹⁷
12. The Leonine Prayers are clearly not part of the Mass, and have never been included in the Missal. Nevertheless, they are said by the celebrant, vested, before leaving the sanctuary,¹⁸ and are intimately bound up with the liturgy and the Faithful’s liturgical experience of Low Mass. The Collect and the Prayer to St Michael are both fine examples of prayer composition, and are much loved by Catholics attached to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite.
13. In practice the Leonine Prayers form a thanksgiving after Mass, and help to form an important habit of immediate thanksgiving for Mass and, when applicable, the reception of Holy Communion, in the Faithful.

¹⁴ The liturgist J.B. O’Connell lists the occasions on which the Leonine Prayers may be omitted as follows. When Low Mass is celebrated with ‘some solemnity’, e.g. a Nuptial Mass or one preceded by the Asperges; when Mass is ‘immediately and duly’ followed by other function, such as Benediction; when a homily is preached, during, before, or after the Mass; when Low Mass is said with a ‘dialogue’ on Sundays or Feast Days; and when another Mass follows immediately without the celebrant leaving the Altar (e.g. on All Souls Day). O’Connell cites a series of decisions of the Sacred Congregation for Rites in support of these principles: SCR 3705, 3855, 3936, 3682, 3805. See J.B. O’Connell *The Celebration of Mass* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1963) pp121-2.

¹⁵ Pope St John Paul II, *Regina Caeli* Address on Sunday 24 April 1994.

¹⁶ Address of Pope Francis On the Dedication of a Statue of St. Michael the Archangel in the Vatican Gardens, July 5, 2013: ‘In consecrating the Vatican City State to St. Michael the Archangel, let us ask him to defend us from the Evil One and cast him out.’

¹⁷ The occasion was the demand that Catholic institutions pay for ‘abortifacients, sterilization, and contraceptive services’ under the US Government’s health care insurance mandate, under the Affordable Care Act, a demand later lifted from dioceses.

¹⁸ Some priests take off the maniple before saying the Leonine Prayers, as for preaching.

Masses for Particular Intentions

14. A Mass itself can, of course, be said for an intention such as the lifting of persecution; furthermore, the Missal includes Votive Masses and Commemorations¹⁹ for this intention.
15. Under the rules in force in 1962, Votive Masses, in general, can only be said on ferias and on 4th Class Feasts;²⁰ Commemorations can in general only be used at Low Mass.²¹ However, the Holy See and local Ordinaries can and historically have encouraged specific Votive Masses and Commemorations to be said by granting wider permission for, or mandating, their use. The best known example of favoured Votive Masses are those for the Sacred Heart on First Fridays.²² Commemorations for the Propagation of the Faith, the Bishop, and the Pope, also have a privileged status, allowing them to be used more often.²³ Ordinaries have the authority to institute '*Oratio imperata*', Commemorations which must be added to Masses for a period of time under specified rules.²⁴ The 1960 rules on Commemorations are more restrictive than the rules they replaced.²⁵
16. In addition to Masses, public processions are another very long-standing form of public prayer for a particular intention. In England and Wales processions are authorised 'In time of war against enemies of Holy Church', with special prayers at their conclusion (see Appendix C).²⁶

Conclusion and Practical Proposals

17. The Leonine Prayers, which call for the 'liberty and exaltation' of the Church, remind us of the need to implore the assistance of heaven for the Church, which continues to be persecuted today just as she was in the days of Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII, even as the geographical focus of these and their predecessor prayers has shifted from the Holy Land, to Rome, and to Russia, as world events have unfolded.

¹⁹ Whereas a Votive Mass is a complete Mass formulary, a Commemoration adds an additional Collect, Secret, and Post Communion prayer to those which are being said for the Mass of the day. There are numerous Votive Masses and Commemorations in the 1962 *Missale Romanum*, and Votive Masses and Commemorations are also found in the Missal of the Ordinary Form.

²⁰ See *Novum rubricarium* (1960) 306-389

²¹ *Ibid.* 106-114

²² 'First Thursday', 'First Friday' and 'First Saturday' Votive Masses, or a Requiem on 3rd, 7th or 30th day after death or burial, have 3rd Class status, meaning that they can be said on feasts of the 3rd Class, as well as 4th Class and ferial days.

²³ Commemorations for the Pope, the Bishop, and the Propagation of the Faith, can be said at Sung and Solemn Masses, and not only at Low Masses.

²⁴ On *Oratio imperata*, *Novum rubricarum* states (459): 'During a public calamity or need which of its nature continues for a long time (e.g., war, plague and such like), the local Ordinary may indeed impose a suitable *oratio imperata* for the whole period of the disaster; but this prayer ... is said only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays;' and not on feasts of the 1st and 2nd Class. For short-term occasions, the restriction to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays does not apply (see 457).

²⁵ Before 1960 the rules can be summarised as follows. In terms of 'private' commemorations celebrants of Masses of simple feasts and lesser ferial days were free to add votive orations as long as the total number in each Mass was five or seven. On semi-double days when the third collect had to be chosen such celebrants were free to add the oration of their choice. In collegiate churches, parochial Masses, and in religious houses, the rector or superior could specify the additional oration. Even public Sung or Solemn Masses on important feasts would allow the celebrant to add a third oration of his choice.

²⁶ In the *Manual of Prayers*, the official guide to paraliturgical devotions authorised by the Hierarchy of England and Wales, in successive editions, up to the edition of 1954.

18. Furthermore, priests and Faithful can say and attend Masses offered for the intention of the persecuted, especially, where possible, using appropriate votive Masses and commemorations, and the Foederatio Internationalis Una Voce urges all Catholics to take advantage of these opportunities. As noted above, the use of these could also be facilitated by mandate of the Holy See or local Ordinary.

Appendix A: the Prayers After Low Mass

The Four Collects of the Prayers commanded to be said by Pope Pius IX in 1859:

Grant us your servants, we beseech thee, O Lord God, to rejoice in perpetual health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin, grant us to be free from present sorrow and delighted by everlasting joy.²⁷

O God, who rejecteth no one, but art appeased in thy tender mercy by the repentance of the greatest sinners, mercifully look down upon our humble prayers, and enlighten our hearts, that we may be able to fulfil thy precepts.²⁸

O God, from whom are holy desires, right counsels, and just works: give to thy servants that which the world cannot give, both that our hearts may be disposed to obey thy commandments, and also, the fear of enemies being removed, our times, by thy protection, may be peaceful.²⁹

O God, who art the Lover and Guardian both of peace and charity, give to all our enemies peace and true charity, and grant them remission of all their sins, and by thy might deliver us from their snares. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.³⁰

The single collect mandated by Pope Leo XIII in 1884

O God, our refuge and strength, attend to and guarantee the prayers of your holy Church so that we may efficaciously follow thee by the intercession of the glorious and Immaculate Virgin Mary Mother of God, St. Joseph, thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul and all the Saints, whom in present necessity we humbly implore. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.³¹

The Prayers as they existed in 1962, and are used in the Extraordinary Form today: Latin text.
V: Ave Maria, grátia plena, Dóminus tecum; benedícta tu in muliéribus, et benedíctus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.

R: Sancta María, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatóribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostræ. Amen.
(ter)

Salve Regína, Mater misericórdiæ; vita, dulcédo et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamámus, éxsules filii Evæ. Ad te suspirámus, geméntes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle. Eia ergo, advocáta nostra, illos tuos misericórdes óculos ad nos convérte. Et Iesum, benedíctum fructum ventris tui, nobis, post hoc exsílium, osténde. O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo María.

V: Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Génatrix.

²⁷ Concede nos famulos tuos, quaesumus Domine Deus, perpetua mentis et corporis sanitate gaudere, et gloriosa Beatae Mariae semper Virginis intercessione, a praesenti liberari tristitia, et aeterna perfrui laetitia.

²⁸ Deus, qui nullum respuis, sed quantumvis peccantibus, per poenitentiam pia miseratione placaris, respice propitius ad preces humilitatis nostrae, et illumina corda nostra, ut tua valeamus implere praecepta.

²⁹ Deus a quo sancta desideria, recta consilia, et iusta sunt opera, da servis tuis illam quam mundus dare non potest pacem: ut et corda nostra mandatis tuis dedita, et hostium sublata formidine, tempora sint tua protectione tranquilla.

³⁰ Deus pacis, charitatisque amator et custos, da omnibus inimicis pacem charitatemque veram, et cunctorum eis remissionem tribue peccatorum, nosque ab eorum insidiis potenter eripe. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

³¹ Deus, refugium nostrum et virtus adesto piis Ecclesiae tuae precibus, et praesta; ut intercedente gloriosa et Immaculata Virgine Dei Genitrice Maria, beato Josepho, ac beatis apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo et omnibus sanctis, quod in praesentibus necessitatibus humiliter petimus, efficaciter consequamur. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

R: Ut digni efficiámur promissionibus Christi.

V: Orémus

Deus, refúgium nostrum et virtus, pópulum ad te clamántem propítius réspice; et intercedénte gloriósa et immaculáta Virgine Dei Genetríce María, cum beáto Ioseph, eius Sponso, ac beátis Apóstolis tuis Petro et Paulo, et ómnibus Sanctis, quas pro conversióne peccatórum, pro libertáte et exaltatióne sanctæ Matris Ecclésiæ, preces effúndimus, miséricors et benígnus exáudi. Per eúndem Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R: Amen.

V: Sancte Michaële Archángele, defénde nos in proélio, contra nequítiam et insídias diabóli esto præsidium. Imperet illi Deus, súpplícites deprecámur: tuque, princeps milítiaæ cæléstis, Sátanam aliósque spíritus malignos, qui ad perditionem animárum pervagántur in mundo, divína virtúte in inférnum detrúde.

R: Amen.

V: Cor Iesu sacratíssimum,

R: Miserére nobis. (*ter*)

Appendix B: Extract of the Allocution of Pope Pius XI on the Leonine Prayers³²

Venerable Brethren, you certainly remember that when, because religion is in turmoil in the Russian regions, we prescribed a day sacred to the Patriarch [St] Joseph, with us giving the lead, common prayers were employed in the Vatican Basilica to God the Best, the Greatest; and that a very numerous and very pious people was present with us, and that the example of Roman citizens—and moreover of others of these who had come together to pray in other sacred churches of the City—was followed in a praiseworthy manner by others from nations nearly everywhere.

As you know, universal consent for our purpose was received, not only from Catholic people but also from many of those separated from us. In their temples, as if in brotherly agreement, supplications were held; a welcome spirit was publicly and privately displayed towards us.

But we ascribe it to the supreme kindness of merciful God that this so great harmony of prayers has not turned out devoid of fruits or useless. We are allowed to hope that it will turn out more fruitful in the future, even though quite recently the enemies of God's name and worship have flared up more violently for the persecution of the Church.

Therefore we must press upon Christ the Redeemer of the human race that he allow tranquillity and the freedom to profess the faith to be restored to the afflicted children of Russia. And so that everyone can press [upon him], with, to be sure, little trouble and inconvenience, we desire that those same prayers which our predecessor of happy memory Leo XIII ordered priests to recite with the people after Holy [Mass] is finished should be said for this same intention, namely for Russia. Let bishops and both [secular and regular] clergy be very diligent in advising their people, or anyone at all who attends Holy [Mass], and let them very frequently recall it to their memories.

³² 30th June 1930; *Acta Apostolicis Sedis* 1930, Vol XXII pp300-1. The translation was commissioned for this paper and was done by RPD.

Appendix C: Procession ‘In Time of War against Enemies of the Church’

The *Manual of Prayer* for England and Wales has prayers for a procession with this intention. The Great Litany is to be followed by these prayers:

Grant unto thy Church, we beseech Thee, O merciful God, that She, being gathered together by the Holy Ghost, may be in no wise troubled by attack from her foes.

O God, who by sin art offended and by penance pacified, mercifully regard the prayers of thy people making supplication unto Thee, and turn away the scourges of thine anger which we deserve for our sins.

Almighty and Everlasting God, in whose hand are the power and the government of every realm: look down upon and help the Christian people that the heathen nations who trust in the fierceness of their own might may be crushed by the power of thine arm. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.

R. Amen.

Appendix D: Collects of the Holy Land Clamor³³

With certain textual variations, the following two collects were the ones most widely used in the Middle Ages for the Holy Land.

Deus, qui ad exhibenda nostre redemptionis mysteria terram promissionis elegisti, libera eam, quaesumus, ab instantia paganorum, ut gentilium incredulitate confusa populus Christianus de tue virtutis potentia gloriatur.³⁴

O God, who chose the Land of Promise to display the mysteries of our redemption, free it, we pray, from the presence of the heathen, that with the disbelief of the gentiles being confounded, the Christian people may boast about the power of your strength.

Deus qui ammirabili providentia cuncta disponis, te suppliciter exoramus, ut terram, quam unigenitus filius tuus proprio sanguine consecravit, de manibus inimicorum crucis eripiens restituas cultui christiano, vota fidelium ad eius liberationem instantium misericorditer dirigendo in viam salutis eterne. Per.³⁵

O God, who arrange all things with wonderful foresight, we suppliantly entreat you to restore to Christian worship, wresting it from the hands of the enemies of the cross, the land that your only-begotten Son consecrated with his own blood, by mercifully directing the prayers of the faithful who are pressing for its delivery into the way of everlasting salvation. Through.

³³ The translations were commissioned for this Paper and were undertaken by RPD.

³⁴ Linder *op. cit.* p37

³⁵ Linder, *op. cit.* p40