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J.M.J.

## THE SECOND PRAYER TO MARY

—Saint Anselm of Canterbury



*The setting for this prayer is a law court. Christ is presiding. The sinner knows his guilt and the justice of the judge. He turns to the Mother of Christ for mercy. Anselm's idea of atonement does not separate Christ and Mary, or justice and mercy. The veritable source of mercy is Jesus Christ. Mary has by grace what is due to her son by nature. All she has, she has only from Him. She is not the one to overturn justice.*

Virgin venerated  
throughout the world,  
Mother dear to the human race,  
Woman, marvel of the angels,  
Mary, most holy.  
By your blessed virginity  
you have made all integrity sacred,  
and by your glorious child-bearing  
you have brought salvation  
to all fruitfulness.  
Great Lady,  
to you the joyous company  
of the saints gives thanks;  
to you the fearful crowd  
of the accused flee;  
and to you, Lady of might and mercy,  
I flee, a sinner every way,  
beyond measure distressed.  
Lady, it seems to me  
as if I were already before the all-  
powerful justice of the stern judge  
facing the intolerable vehemence  
of His wrath,

while hanging over me  
is the enormity of my sins,  
and the huge torments  
they deserve.

Most gentle Lady,  
whose intercession  
should I implore  
when I am troubled with horror,  
and shake with fear,  
but hers,  
whose womb embraced  
the reconciliation of the world?  
Whence should I most surely hope  
for help quickly in need,  
but from her whence I know came  
the world's propitiation?  
Who can more easily gain pardon  
for the accused by her intercession,  
than she who gave milk to Him  
who justly punishes  
or mercifully pardons  
all and each one?

[...]Good Lord and good Lady,  
dear Son and dear mother by this truth  
which is the only hope of sinners,  
that You will be her Son  
and you will be His mother  
to save this sinner.

Thus, thus let this sinner be absolved  
and cared for, healed and saved.  
In this he shows himself  
to be your sinner, as indeed he is,

for he knows You to be both Son and  
Mother for the salvation of sinners.  
Indeed, I am the sinner  
who belongs to You both.

When I have sinned against the Son,  
I have alienated the Mother,  
nor can I offend the Mother  
without hurting the Son.  
What will you do, then, sinner?  
Where will you flee?  
Who can reconcile me to the Son  
if the Mother is my enemy,  
or who will make my peace  
with the Mother  
if I have angered the Son?  
Surely if I have offended You  
both equally  
You will both also be merciful?  
So the accused flees from the just God  
to the good Mother of the merciful God.  
The accused finds refuge  
from the Mother he has offended  
in the good Son  
of the kind Mother.  
The accused is carried from one  
to the other  
and throws himself between  
the good Son and the good Mother.

Dear Lord, spare the servant  
of Your Mother;  
dear Lady, spare the servant of your Son.  
Good Son, make Your servant's peace

with Your Mother;  
good Mother, reconcile your Son  
to your servant.

When I throw myself between two  
of such unbounded goodness  
I shall not fall under the severity  
of their power.

Good Son, good Mother,  
do not let me confess this truth  
about You in vain,  
lest I blush for hoping  
in Your goodness.

I love the truth I confess about You,  
and I beg for that goodness  
which I hope for from You.

Tell me, judge of the world, whom  
You will spare, tell me, reconciler of the  
world, whom You will reconcile, if You,  
Lord, condemn, and you, Lady, turn  
away your goodness and love from this  
little man who confesses his sin with  
sorrow?

Saviour of each one, tell me whom  
You will save, Mother of salvation, tell  
me for whom you will pray, if it is by  
Your command, Lord, and with your  
consent, Lady, that torments vex the  
sinner who blames himself and prays to  
you, that hell absorbs the prisoner  
who accuses himself and entreats you,  
that Tartarus devours the poor man  
who despairs of himself and hopes in  
you.

God, who was made the Son of a woman  
out of mercy; woman, who was made  
Mother of God out of mercy;  
have mercy upon this wretch,  
You forgiving, you interceding,  
or show the unhappy man to whom he  
may flee for safety  
and point out in whose power he may  
more certainly confide.

If it is—or rather because it is—  
that my sin is so great and my faith so  
small, so cool my love, so feeble my  
prayer, so imperfect my satisfaction,  
that I deserve neither the forgiveness of  
sins nor the grace of salvation,  
for this very reason I ask that in  
whatever way You see that my merits are  
not sufficient for me,  
there in Your mercy You will not be  
found wanting.

So I ask You to hear me  
by Your own merits rather than mine,  
so that by the goodness You pour forth  
and the power in which You abound,  
I may escape the sorrows of damnation  
which I deserve and enter into the joy of  
the blessed to praise You, God,  
who are worthy to be praised and  
exalted for ever. Amen.

Source: *Johann Roten S.M.*, “Anselm of  
Canterbury: The Marian Spirituality of  
Saint Anselm” <https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/a/anselm-of-canterbury.php>