

Life of the Spirit

Volume V

SEPTEMBER 1950

Number 51

PRAYER FOR ENGLAND

[The following prayer, in Latin and in English, was found by pursuivants in a priest hunt, and quoted as an example of papal aggression in a vicious little work on the Gunpowder Plot written in 1606. This work never saw the light, and exists in manuscript in the British Museum (Harl. 360, fol. 99).

The prayer shows us how our Catholic forefathers prayed in the midst of persecution. It bears a striking resemblance to Cardinal Gasquet's prayer which we say every Sunday, though they are obviously quite independent. I have modernised the spelling, and I give the refrain in Latin as well, to show the freedom of translation.
—G.A.]



BLESSED VIRGIN, Saint Mary, our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God, who with all the saints dost not cease to pray unto Almighty God in general for succour in all distresses of the whole Catholic Church, I beseech thee most humbly that as it hath both pleased thee of special favour to take upon thee the special protection of this realm of England thy Dower, so thou wilt vouchsafe by thy special prayers to thy sweet Son our Lord Jesus Christ, to prefer the same continually, and at this present, most instantly to deliver it from schism and heresy, and to restore it again to the unity of the holy Catholic Church, that all English people, above all other nations, may worthily from henceforth call thee blessed, and honour thy name for ever, saying thus:

O Blessed Virgin, praise to thee, England thy Dowry
Was lost, is turned by thee again from schism and heresy.
Dos tua Virgo pia
Per te est conversa, Maria.