

An Active and Spontaneous Love. We Must Go Directly to Our Lord¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
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[...]

Let us meditate on God's love. Since God's love is always active, it will not be genuine unless it is active in the world. God's love has a tendency to make us work out of love, in such a way that God works in us and we in him. God is always active. The Father begets the Son, the Son is begotten by the Father, the Holy Spirit is the love of Father and Son. God is active in the soul because he is the source of its life. My Sisters, if the love of God is in you, it will be active and ever at work and compel you to work. This is how everything is done under the inspiration of love, always the motivating force of our work.

For love to bear fruit, it produces two things: conformity of the will to our Lord's, and total dedication to this divine will.

First, there is absolute need for conformity. Love cannot exist between two hearts without conformity and empathy. What pleases one pleases the other; what one likes the other will also like. Love brings about empathy, conformity in thought and action. For this reason, it is said that love is an imitator. Since your love for our Lord is one of surrender, it will always be a love of conformity. Even a child takes on the mannerisms of its mother, whom it loves even before its father. The child will mimic even the less desirable mannerisms of its mother. Later it will also love and imitate its father, even the father's way of thinking, for love transmits life. In the same way, there must be conformity of thought and life in your relationship with our Lord.

[...] Our Lord said, *Whoever loves me hears my word.* [Jn 14:23] **There must then be spontaneity.** One who loves does not need lengthy discussions, which would be displeasing if they did occur. Of its very nature, love is spontaneous; the greater the spontaneity the greater the sign of affection. This is one of the most powerful signs of love. So my good daughters, it quite humiliating if someone asks us a sacrifice and we take hours to think it over for fear that it might be overly demanding. This would prove how small one's love for our Lord. If you hear the bell ring and still delay, this is another sign that your love is weak. Genuine love runs, flies: *Currit et volat.* The angels would be troubled at any delay in fulfilling God's commands. [...] In any battle those who are fearful tremble, while those who truly love their king throw themselves into the fray. This is proof of their loyalty.

This rule of spontaneity is the only sign by which we can judge how great is our love for God. Again, this doesn't mean that passions and self-love will not rebel; but if we love God, however, we will overcome all kinds of obstacles. It is very humiliating for us to be always hesitating, due to self-love, when he calls us. We weigh things, and check our pulse before committing ourselves. How human we still are! If we really loved, we would be happy to be called to his service. A courtier is always happy to fulfill a dangerous duty for the king. He says, *The king noticed me.* He runs with joy even to his own death. Hesitation proves our excessive self-love. You may argue that this is too perfect. The point is that you don't love. One who is slow in responding to his parents doesn't really love them, for love needs to be spontaneous. Did our Lord ever have to be told twice by his Father before doing something? He acted immediately. Love and will are the same. What one really wants is fulfilled when there is love. When chains are needed to make us obey, this is no longer love. [...] We become mercenaries expecting an instant reward.

¹ Number 450. *L'amour actif, spontané. Il faut aller droit à notre Seigneur..*

The *Imitation* asks, When will we do for our Lord what we do for the world? Isn't he worth it? Why not do for our Lord what we do for ourselves? This is spontaneity? We rush to what pleases us and reject what we dislike. God created human beings with feelings of sympathy or antipathy. If we need to reason out everything, we couldn't survive. While the fullness of love works instinctively by feelings, weaker love measures things. That's why there are so many faults; our love is half-hearted.

I beg you, my Sisters, let love reign in your hearts. Be perfect, but with the perfection of spontaneity, not out of fear, laziness, or anything else, put all that aside. Spontaneity will produce the Eucharistic life in you, our Lord needs to do this himself. If we die to ourselves, our Lord will live in us almost imperceptibly. Since love is our rule and our life, it will be active in us by its very spontaneity. If our mind asks for obedience and our heart sees only God, love will become our primary motivation, our rule of life. One might say that obedience would no longer be needed, for love would respond immediately to God without going through the virtues. Love will compel you to practice all the virtues. This is why spontaneity is needed to transform you directly into our Lord, not [passing through] the acts of virtue. Love proceeds quickly, like a blazing fire, and never looks back.

Once established, love has no so-called conditions, but works perfectly. When it works, love does not have degrees, it wants the soul in its entirety. However, it captures the soul seemingly through degrees of devotion, even if it already possesses the soul. Love must always be active, and cannot act without possessing. Your part is to grow and become purer. This is the first effect of love.

I would not say these things to another religious community, as they would not understand. This is not their particular grace. I would urge them to show their love for the Good Lord by obedience and sacrifice. (Obedience is the sacrifice and this sacrifice is virtue.) I don't speak that way to you, because the expression, obedient in love, may lead to a feeling that can become an obstacle or a way out for those who are ignorant of love. Passing through obedience in keeping the rule implies passing through a person and a regulation. This way is longer. There may be temptations and obstacles. Obedience may be directed only to the human person, the human voice, one chosen by our Lord to speak in his name, and go no further.

How would you respond if someone told you that light comes from a cloud? Surely you would think this is silly, for obviously the cloud does not give off light. The sun hides behind it, and the cloud is something of an obstacle because it clearly softens the sunlight. Anyone that our Lord uses as a means or an instrument is like the cloud of obedience. This cloud does not possess any light or heat in itself but rather obscures the sunlight that is too bright for our eyes. If our Lord were to speak to us directly we might die. It would be silly for you to go no further than the cloud, a mere mass of gases. You would be a fool to go no further than the person, the created instrument, rather than to **proceed directly to our Lord who is everything**. Does anyone thank the sun for the light and heat that it gives off? No one, of course.

Now you understand why I don't address you as I would other congregations. Such an approach might be an obstacle or a temptation for you, as you might not penetrate beyond the outer sense of the words. It would be silly for you to obey merely for human reasons. Our Lord grants some authority to some of us merely as doorkeepers and watchmen, so that all will be legally correct because we are his ministers. What would you think of someone offering praise to a mailman? The mailman would say, I merely carry the letters but have no idea of their contents. Many persons look no further than the clouds and work only for this cloud. After their death the Good Lord will tell them, I was behind the cloud. This is why I dread human instruments. Many persons who were devout in the world broke their hearts for a superior. It would have been better for them to continue taking care of their sheep. So I tell you, aspire to greatness.

Love brings about conformity. Of necessity the superior acts in the name of the community, but love reaches out higher. Go then to our Lord, my poor Daughters; he is your teacher. If you don't stoke the fire, it will go out. When God sends an ambassador, an angel in human form, it is tempting to pause before the beauty of the messenger. While obedience is necessary, go beyond the messenger when you obey. Make an act of love and go forward. God provides a human voice and words, but ultimately he made you free. Go then to our Lord, let love make you open to all that love wants, with a sympathetic, prompt, and joyous response. Ask anything of a happy person and she will hasten to do it. Do likewise, just as our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Be eagles of love, eagles don't walk, they fly.

Point for reflection:

What are the signs of a true love? What are its obstacles? How does the Founder define perfection?