

# Joy and Graciousness<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,  
Paris, Friday, October 12, 1860

I read one book of the minutes you have written up of my talks. Before I read and approved them, you might have had some hesitation over a few words. While reading, I reflected that God had given me the light of the moment. I admit that I was surprised. You might say, It's meant for me; what is special is really meant for us. That's your [part of the] work. If God mercifully continues to give me something to give you, you will have, not a complete course, but some material for your edification. I did not have time to prepare to continue the conference on the hidden life; I was caught in the confessional. I asked the Good Lord: What shall I tell these good daughters?

**I would like to see you very happy, the happiest in the world.** In religious life, your graces are so great that you certainly must be happy. The rich are happy when they receive news of some new inheritance; you should have the same happiness. **What do you lack, what can you not find in the Eucharist?** Other religious don't have what you have. I would say to any sister who is not happy, You are mistaken; go elsewhere; the king does not need alms; he feeds his own. I would like to see you happy, because your life has the character of love. There is nothing here to make you sad; everything leads you to the Blessed Sacrament, where everything is festive, since it is the triumph of Jesus Christ. This is the name the Church gives to Corpus Christi, in French "La Fête-Dieu" (The Feast of God). In a triumphal feast no one wears mourning clothes; in heaven the saints are happy. You must share a little of that, with this difference that it is not the happiness of glory, but the happiness of love.

[...]

Take away your sadness by **seeing how good our Lord is.** See yourself in his love. A person who is always looking at herself in a mirror will eventually find herself beautiful. One learns to accept one's limitations. See yourself in love, in the goodness of our Lord; there, you will find nothing to fear. I want to see you happy. I know that the devil will disturb your happiness. He will use only one weapon, self-love, the "I". Besides, when you are sulking, when you have behaved badly, you have then abandoned the divine mirror and see yourselves in your little virtues or in your major defects. All this makes you sad. A convict is never happy; he is always face to face with his evil deeds. If you act that way, you too will be sad.

**In your community there must be a transfiguration of love;** let your life be a tabernacle, a ciborium. You don't have to go on the housetop to shout that you are happy, but, like the rays of the sun, joy must radiate from you. In your family life, each one must bring her little share of joy to the community; each one should correct mannerisms that are not suitable in community. *Whoever wishes to follow me must deny his very self,* said our Lord (Mt 16:24). Self-denial is necessary to live in community. This is how you enter into the joy of your vocation. As women, you have more need than we do to be friendly and gracious, to have the courtesy of love. Your character is more sensitive, more vulnerable, more intuitive – after all, you are women – and if you have peace among yourselves, you are like angels.

**What must be done?** Be happy in your vocation. I have observed servants sacrificing for their masters. Suppose someone in society enters into marriage. She will do all she can to soften a partner who is human only in appearance. If people do this in human society merely for material gain, how could you refuse to do as much out of love for God? You have the strongest motive of all to be happy. Before the institution

---

<sup>1</sup> Number 268. *Joie et amabilité.*

of the Eucharist, even the apostles were unhappy. They argued, sought the first places, looked at each other with jealousy, allowed self-love to dominate. Each one sought his own well-being. Once they were given Communion in joy, their jealousy vanished because they then understood that their first objective was to please the Lord. We read in the Acts, *The community of believers were of one heart and one mind* (Acts 4:32). St. Luke tells us why: *the apostles were teaching them charity, and they gave it to them through the Eucharist* (cf. Acts 2:42).

**So be gracious, then.** Let the postulants and novices show respect to the sisters. Let the novices become daughters to the professed and the professed become mothers for the novices. Let each one give of herself. Nothing else is needed! My good Daughters, work hard to grow in this area. If I were like the angels of the Lord, I could immediately see on your faces if you are happy. Anyone in the world who receives a big gift from someone knows how to show it. Let us be gracious, even when feeling sad. I don't understand how anything we do for the Blessed Sacrament could be difficult. Anyone who loves the Blessed Sacrament will love everything done for him.

I admit that I am very happy to see so many people working for the glory of the Blessed Sacrament. This is the joy of our mission. What do I wish? That our Lord be great, honored, and served by us and by everybody. Kings have several armies at their service. The soldiers are divided into several regiments, with different grades, but all are happy to serve under the same flag. In the world I say: there are people who love the Master; must attention be given to names and classes? Let everything aim clearly at the glory of the Lord. Love your Society; it is your mission, your family, and your neighbor, a good neighbor who loves the Good Lord.



**Point for reflection :**

The greatest desire of Father Eymard was that the sisters be genuinely happy. In this instruction he gives the reasons for this joy, and warns them against its loss. He presents the Eucharist as the motive of joy and explains his own. What practical conclusions can you draw from this?