

Reparation. The Words of Our Lord on the Cross¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Friday, August 19, 1859

My Sisters, do not forget the role of reparation, especially on Friday, or whenever you adore on the other days, in the morning or evening. Actually, the evening is the best time for reparation and propitiation, as you recall the crucifixion of our Lord, our priceless redemption. One is better disposed through union with our Lord. One has a special grace that speaks to the soul and senses; there is something easier and more touching, while the topics under consideration become more striking.

One can adore with an adoration of reparation in several ways. The best is to make it with our Lord on the Cross, offering to the Heavenly Father the sufferings and crucifixion of our Lord for those who offend him every day. One can make reparation through our Lord by participating in the sufferings of his body and soul, begging pardon, offering the sufferings of his body for the sins people commit with their bodies, and the sufferings of his soul for internal sins.

Offering our Lord in this way is the best way to make a good act of reparation. While it is true that he offers himself, I advise you to offer him also, and to join him in offering yourself, uniting your small daily sufferings to his, offering our Lord to himself. This is an excellent way of reparation.

One must pray to make reparation for the sins of the whole world; first our own sins, then for the sins of those in high places, the sins of priests and persons consecrated to God. They offend him so much, due to their high position and many graces. The fault of a child is more painful than that of fifty thousand strangers, likewise that of a spouse against her husband. The closer the relationships, the greater the pain. If you knew all the offenses, sins, and sacrileges of priests, religious women, and those in the world who have made the vow of chastity, you would not have enough tears to shed. Our Lord is so offended! Even if there were only a few, there must be reparation. We may often have become indignant over Judas, but others are even more to be blamed. Although Judas knew that Jesus was a good man, he did not know that he was his God.

Why didn't our Lord place certain limits to prevent any sacrilege from offending him personally? Bad priests should not dare celebrate Mass out of fear of being struck by lightning. Persons of rank, like sovereigns, do not allow armed assassins to approach them. Yet, our Lord allows them, and even covers them with his mantle to hide them from view, to protect the honor and dignity of the priesthood. One might say, he's going too far. But that's the extent of his love, so that good persons will not be shocked and become the first to keep their distance, considering themselves unworthy.

All these things fill one's heart with sadness. You may not be aware that there are priests who forget their duties. Even if they are not sacrilegious, they become oblivious of what is truly important. Today, I saw a renegade priest begging for food. Unhappily many are easily tempted, making of their priesthood a mere trade for the acquisition of a property or a house, or to enrich their relatives. How sad this is! When a priest is transferred from a poor parish, people say he has been rewarded and must be pleased. Now he is in charge of a thousand five hundred and fifty souls! His stipend is high, his residence comfortable, and the church is also beautiful. As a result, he is truly rich. The care of souls is no longer his first concern. In days gone by the primary objective was the conversion of sinners. Now a poor parish is

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considered an evil, especially if money is lacking. Priests have become enmeshed in worldly affairs, chatting among themselves about money and positions of dignity.

Sometimes, to encourage a priest, a bishop will give him a better parish, as like a promotion. This is a great temptation, not from the Good Lord's point of view, but from that of the people, who think that a priest must become a good administrator, to be named pastor of a district. How sad! Here, a pastor receives 4,000 francs, some up to 6,000. It is sad to see while they do good work, they are exposed to many temptations and end up unhappy. In the city, they are invited to parties and dinners. Busy with administration, celebrations, burying of the dead, they would be more pleasing to the Good Lord if they prayed more and celebrated less, instead of spending the entire day around coffins. They have no time to visit our Lord and adore him! Poor priests! The devil encourages all these obstacles and people love to have a priest around to lessen their feeling of guilt. Pray for priests. They are to be pitied in the midst of today's world. Pray. This is our Lord's will.

It's important to pray for priests. If they are good, the faithful are good; if they are bad, so are the faithful. All revolutions come from the sins of priests, not from the sins of others, but from those of priests, even from only one, according to St. Alphonse of Liguori. Crucifixion destroyed the Jewish nation, and there was only one crucifixion.

Among the ordinary faithful in the world, **there are very few who love our Lord!** They have time for the demands of the world, for make-up, and social visits, but have no time to pray. Their days are totally absorbed with family and social engagements. On judgment day, they will see if our Lord will accept these excuses. There is time for everything except God. The devil has so entangled worldly people that they have no more time for anything, having become instruments of Satan.

Many Christians have become pagan, unbelievers, philosophers, and atheists who offend our Lord! The greater number are renegades and apostates, composed mostly of bad Catholics, not Protestants. There are fewer wayward Protestants than evil Catholics. Voltaire was a Catholic, while Rousseau was a Protestant. But Voltaire and his followers, like d'Alembert were all Catholic. There is no doubt that our Lord sees the small nucleus of faithful ones that please him very much. But he has the heart of a father, seeing so many who go astray, offending him, and getting lost. The little good done by the faithful ones does not equal the evil done by the wicked. Good actions are much less numerous than crimes committed. But our Lord remains because of those who remain faithful. I'm not talking about the pagans, heretics, and idolaters who stay away from him through sin. For if they were faithful, God would send them an angel, a missionary.

My Sisters, when you love someone, your love is not limited to his times of honor and glory, but partakes of his pains and sorrows. Since you have three adorations daily, set one apart for reparation; it will be the best. **You are practicing these two things: adoration and reparation.** You are offering yourself and asking grace from the Good Lord, begging his mercy. To have pity on these poor persons is good, but to heal them is better. When a priest is lost, God will send his angels. He cannot resist a prayer done with trust. We could save the whole world if we knew how to pray. Prayer is more powerful than the malice of men and the devil. The Blessed Virgin converted the people of her time. Those who were not converted had sinned against the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 12:32). We cannot say, however, that all the other sins were against the Holy Spirit. The prayer of a Christian is the prayer of Jesus Christ, accompanied by penance. How did the saints pray? They simply had recourse to God. **Reparation must be an essential part of your life;** since your spouse is always crucified, you must always be ready to console him.

There are other ways to sympathize with the sufferings of our Lord and to intercede with him for sinners. One that I like very much is to use the words of our Lord on the Cross, making reparation to God the father, and to Jesus Christ by means of his own merciful words.

The first word: *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do* (Lk 23:34). They do not recognize you in the Blessed Sacrament, for they are blind. As our Lord prayed for the executioners, the gravity of their sins is diminished. We must ask mercy, using these words for each one: My God, grant pardon for these sinful priests; they are our leaders, your members, your crown. We must give him reasons; although he knows them already, he wants us to express them. We must then reason out, argue, quarrel, and beg for mercy. There are so many people who do not know you; they do not realize that you died for them. Admittedly there are some who do know, but let your goodness then be greater than their wickedness, your grace stronger than their temptations; pardon them. After that, you can speak to Jesus Christ: If they knew your goodness and mercy, perhaps they would surrender; if only they experienced the joy of loving you.

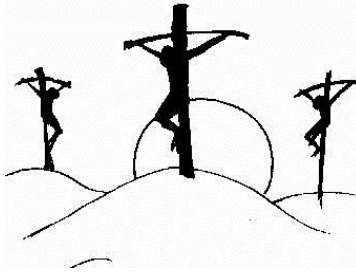
Then, repeat it again, since love always repeats itself. Always with the same goal, one repeats the same prayer, even if it seems to be always the same, that's the right thing to do. One must employ one's imagination, seeing our Lord on Calvary, admiring his goodness, addressing him with his own words. The imagination, the heart, the body, the will – everything is focused on him without distractions.

Move on to the other words: *Remember me*, says the good thief, *when you come into your kingdom; Lord, remember me at the hour of my death* (cf. Lk 23:42). The good thief makes a beautiful profession of faith: *We have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal* (cf. Lk 23:41). He has no fear of the executioner; since he is on the side of justice, he fears nothing. He turns towards the one he considers as truly just, our Lord, and calls him, Lord. Omitting other details, he simply calls him his Lord and God, and makes his request. To a person in high authority, one does not say: Pray. But this is his Lord and God. This confession is much better than that of St. Thomas (cf. Jn 20:28). He calls him his king: Give me the last place, for I am a miserable sinner. Our Lord responds: *Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise* (Lk 23:43). We must remind our Lord not to forget us and all the others, and ask him to bring us to his kingdom.

Make reparation through the Blessed Virgin, begging her heartily at the foot of the cross. She was offering her son for the salvation of the world, and offering herself to him. It is there that, for the first time, she is mother of everyone, and their salvation is very dear to her heart. We must offer our Lord the anguish and tears of his mother. It is very easy to offer the Blessed Virgin to our Lord. We must do so, since she is the great mediatrix, becoming one in her. We should pause for a while, especially if the timing of our reparation is the hour of the death of our Lord. There is a difference of one hour, more or less, with Jerusalem a little south of us. Before three fifteen, we stand before our Lord on the cross. But after that, the Blessed Virgin remains there on Calvary as the model of reparation. We can spend more time in reparation with her.

The fifth word: *I thirst* (Jn 19:28). Our Lord is thirsting for souls, their salvation, to see the glory of his heavenly Father established throughout the universe. How shall we quench that thirst? Since he is thirsting for souls, the way to satisfy that thirst is to offer ourselves as bail, to become the victim. Doing this in general or having particular persons in mind, we will indeed slake the thirst of our Lord.

My God, why have you forsaken me? (cf. Mt 27:46) We entreat our Lord not to abandon poor sinners, to pardon them. We beg him not to strike them, to give them a year, two years, three years, ever more time, not allowing them to be struck by death, by the devil. Time is needed to place fertilizer around the tree (cf. Lk 13:8), that it may not be cursed. We appeal to his goodness and mercy; we argue with him (cf. Gn 18:16,33; Ex 32:9,12,32), since we must wrangle from our Lord the things he finally grants to those he loves. **Finally, you entrust your soul to our Lord, as you entrust to him the souls of these poor persons. You can then say, they will be saved.**



Points for reflection:

St. Peter Julian tells us that we have a mission of adoration and reparation. He invites us to share the sufferings of Christ. He suggests various means of reparation. Which one corresponds to your personal grace? Take note of the Scripture passages quoted here. Which one touched you the most?