

The Attraction of Eucharist, the Attraction of Recollection¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Wednesday, October 19, 1859

The last time, I spoke to you about [the grace of] attraction. You sensed that I was not free; I could not express my complete thought in front of a visitor. I will finish today.

I told you that we must serve our Lord according to our internal state,² because this state is the positive indication of the will of God. **Moreover, we must follow the attraction of the grace that then becomes the motivation of all the actions of our life, because that's why it is offered.** The attraction of grace for you can only be a Eucharistic attraction. If you had a different one, it could be a movement of grace, but not an attraction. God cannot contradict himself. He cannot give you a contrary attraction that would split your way to sanctification. In that case, you would need to leave. **You need the attraction of the Eucharist; that is, the Holy Eucharist must be the principle of everything, your center and your end.**

The principle. That which produces something is called its principle, as the spring is the principle of the stream, the roots of the tree, and the soul of the body. Your attraction must come from the divine Eucharist, all your graces will come from there. It is your treasure, completely in God, completely in Jesus Christ. So much so that if you had some light, some movement of generosity, some inclination for a particular virtue, or something else that did not come from the Eucharist, immediately you should forget about it, because it would fragment your soul. It would be a movement of devotion or a spiritual liking, but it would not be an attraction of grace. Everything must make you appreciate your vocation as beautiful and holy; in other words, it must strengthen, encourage, and transform you in the grace of this vocation. Anything else is not an attraction, not a supernatural movement, because all supernatural graces lead to our perfection in our vocation.

Since your goal is to honor our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, especially his hidden life, as good servants you need the graces that harmonize with this goal. You must at all times live for the Eucharist. How will you recognize that the attraction or grace you receive is Eucharistic? When it makes you more recollected. A grace that merely stimulates charity and zeal – is very good – but when the attraction begins with some external activity, we must distrust it. Human nature is so active, and has such a need to expand and give itself to others, that it finds ways to reconcile nature and grace. The person immediately thinks that this is what God wants, and feels generous and ready to convert the world. This is not an attraction, and the soul could be mistaken. An attraction tends to make us die to ourselves, in order to live in Jesus Christ.

The main characteristic of an attraction is recollection. The recollected soul withdraws within. It is something that gives her a sense of well-being, a great presence of God, as though we feel our senses folding and embracing him. We become like Magdalene (cf. Lk 7:36-50), remaining, with an attraction of love, at the feet of Jesus Christ; we become like St. John (cf. Jn 13:23). But, you might say, he was sleeping. Not at all: it was a mysterious slumber – he was resting in the arms of love. He was drawing

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² Guillot, and (S7bis) begin in this way: My Daughters, we must serve our Lord according to our interior attraction (Il faut, mes filles, servir notre Seigneur selon son attrait intérieur)

therefrom his beautiful doctrine of love which he gave us in his writings and left us in his life. The Blessed Virgin withdrew into our Lord in order to lose herself in him, like a drop of water in the ocean.

My good Sisters, when you receive a grace of recollection from our Lord, preserve it carefully. Human nature scatters, like the wind in the forest, shaking the trees and causing the leaves, flowers and fruits to fall – nature shakes things, because it needs movement. Act with God in the way of love. Love embraces what it loves: it wants to enclose the beloved in its heart to be totally one.

Live from the grace of recollection. Prefer it to all others. When you receive such a grace, put all others aside. You must bind your hands and feet, seal your lips, and place yourself entirely at the service and disposition of God, allowing no contrary movement. What will happen with this grace of recollection? You will enjoy God without any effort: you will be like an open vessel, like a half-open flower, because this effortless recollection leaves one feeling calm. However, one thing is needed: remain recollected, and don't pass to activity. Listen well: Please God, that you may experience it! You might say it's just laziness. Is it? It's rude of you to want to be talking and working all the time when our Lord says: Listen to me. Or when he reveals himself as beautiful and loving and says: Look at me. Sometimes he may seem to reject you, but let him do what he wants. Clearly, he's driving in more deeply the arrows of his love. But we who are not familiar with the ways of God, unaware of God's work, think that unless we start babbling we are doing nothing. We are not poor; we want to give something. What will we give? Some aimless activity.

Happy the one who understands that in this kind of recollection in a quarter of an hour we accomplish more than we could do in a hundred years; in one hour, we do more than in an entire day. Rain from heaven makes fruitful, so that grace penetrates more easily, along with light and virtue – more than the aimless agitation of an entire year. I'm convinced of this.

It follows that this attraction of recollection is meant for all of you, because you are called Servants, and the perfection of a servant is that, when the master calls, the servant hastens.

It also follows from this that, when you are recollected, our Lord will give you more light and love, from his pure goodness, than from anything you might do. Consequently, the prayer of recollection is the best of all, because the soul puts itself at the disposition of God. There's a price: while we feel recollected, we cannot always remain in this grace that penetrates like the sun. When we feel cold, God enlightens our eyes, gives joy to the heart, and warms us. And what must we do when we see a cloud coming? We quickly cover ourselves while the cloud passes, so that it will not rob us of this heat. This grace, which is primarily a pure grace, becomes an exercise of virtue. First of all, it is a grace, and then it becomes meritorious.

The thing to do is to prolong this recollection as long as possible. What's best for us is to go back on it as much as we can, to enjoy it, and remain recollected. This teaching is very simple, and perfect, because it is the application of these words of our Lord: *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him* (Jn 6:56) – to remain does not mean to scatter oneself and go outside.

A servant pleases a king by responding swiftly to his desires. Let us do the same; gather around our Lord. Since we should not be deprived of our inner life, we cannot stay very long where Jesus Christ is absent; he takes my life and he gives me his. The object of love is our life; lovers live together, like a child lives from love in her mother, like a creature lives in its creator. He is in me, and I in him: Jesus Christ and the soul live in each other. Happy is that soul that can approach Jesus Christ and talk with him, like a child with its father!

Do you know what grace I am asking for you? Without doubt, the Eucharistic spirit – nothing else. Living in Jesus Christ, you will be recollected. But, you might say, the life of recollection is a constant transformation, and therefore is there nothing for the exterior? When you are strong enough, our Lord will give you the entire world to work in, but not as the center of your life.

When the angels receive an assignment from God towards some saintly person, or another person, they move as fast as lightning (cf. Ps 102:20). There's nothing more important, like the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation (cf. Lk 1:26-38), and like Raphael who remained several months working with Tobiah. What was he doing? He never lost sight of God – his hands and feet were active, but he was always in God's presence. He told Tobiah: *I appeared to be eating, but my nourishment was within, I was feeding on God* (cf. Tb 12:19). That's why the angels never lose sight of God (cf. Mt 18:10). We should be like them. Nothing unites like love, and nothing is more devoted than love. You must live in this way if you want to be happy.



Points for reflection:

What is a Eucharistic attraction? What are its characteristics? How do you define it? What are its principle, its characteristics, and its purpose?