

The Hidden Life of Jesus¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Friday, June 11, 1858

Our Lord preferred to choose the hidden life, from his birth to the time when he began his public life. For thirty years, he lived unknown to the world, but his love for the hidden life shines in all its brilliance in the most Blessed Sacrament. In fact, nothing appears there – all is veiled: his beauty, his majesty, and his glory are not seen. The divine gentleness of his words is not heard; only one thing is evident, the virtue he cherishes – humility.

My Sisters, you should live a life hidden with our Lord, that is, a normal common life. Your external virtues must be ordinary. Do not talk about your worldly honors, like your name and benefactors. Say nothing about what you are and what you want to be – oftentimes, under the guise of edification, we say these things out of self-love. [...] **Your devotion will be common, without being singled out externally by extraordinary features.** In the church you should appear like other devout persons. Your virtues, your mortification, and your internal poverty might be perfect, but nothing of that is visible.

Servants of Jesus, **you must imitate your divine master**; imitate his hidden life in every way. When the master does not manifest himself, do the servants do so? Notice how, in his mortal life, our Lord hid even the brightness of his virtues: his gentleness, his charity, his humility, etc. He manifested only what was necessary. Now! My good Sisters, [...] be simple, [...] you will be happy to the extent that your life, your death are hidden. In this way, you will be closer to your divine master. It would be very unfortunate if you become known too soon. The most Blessed Virgin practiced this virtue to perfection; she never revealed her divine maternity; she kept God's secret. When she went to the Temple, her posture and prayer were like the others. She mingled with the other women as one of them.

I fear only one thing for you, namely, that you will be recognized. For, if people knew your treasure, your grace, everyone living an interior life would come to you. It's a good thing that you are not numerous, so that you can become good foundation stones. The devil is furious against the hidden life and interior souls. He tolerates pious persons who pour themselves out in works of charity, because he can attack them through vain glory; but he cannot stand interior souls: he cannot reach them. Avoid the world. Avoid especially pious persons who slip everywhere into religious communities to find out what is going on, and then gossip about it. They often cause trouble in these houses.

Our Lord said: ***Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him*** (cf. Jn 14:21). Therefore, pray well, my Sisters, that our Lord may show himself to you, and show you his holy will. Be of good will, and remain faithful to the inspirations of grace without refusing anything. It would be insulting to refuse our Lord anything. You must not practice false humility by saying: I am not worthy of this vocation. If our Lord has chosen you, if he indicates that he wants you, that's good. He is working in you, my poor Sisters, as he does in the Eucharist which is a sign of life and of death. Before instituting it, our Lord destroyed the substance of bread and wine. In the same way, he chooses those who are nothing, those who are weak, for this work that will be great some day. In this retreat, you must not seek devotion and consolations. You must seek our Lord with good will and tell him: If you want me for your servant, here I am ready to serve you as you will. A servant must be dedicated, subject to her master, and serve him with humility.

¹ Number 27. *Vie cachée de Jésus*. This retreat took place during the Foundation Retreat, when the first group was preparing to take their vows.