

# We Must Leave Ourselves to Enter into Our Lord<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Paris, Tuesday, May 20, 1862

My Sisters, in the last conference<sup>2</sup> we were saying that the first work of grace is self-detachment. If we review our life, we see that the Good Lord is always working to free us by detaching us, distancing us either from sources of temptation, or occasions [that drain our] affection. Why? In order to fill us – that's clear. Our Lord **disengages us from the world and from ourselves, in order to fill us**, to take over our hearts, to become truly our life. In this way, my good Sisters, we go towards life by dying – not only in the natural order, but even in relation to the angels and saints.

The Good Lord is always on the lookout to shake us when we become too human and natural. Why? **To liberate us and unite us to himself, because, my good Sisters, there is only one obstacle**, namely, self-love that prevents God from uniting himself to us – these are the two loves that oppose each other. We should not be surprised when our Lord takes his chisel to polish the stones that make up the heavenly Jerusalem, as the Church says, because we always tend to reclaim ourselves – and we do this at every moment. We have such a slavish and materialistic nature that, even when talking to God, we are taking ourselves back.

**There are certain defects that we cannot correct.** I was a teacher long enough to know this. One day, I was talking to a young man belonging to a rich family: his mother said to me: he has one defect – he's a thief. He doesn't need anything. He was expelled from school because he was stealing. Here is some money: you can give him some once in a while so that he will not steal. He was always stealing – we caught him red handed. – But, I did not steal. – Still we punished him. We are thieves: our self-love is a robber – we take back what we give to God.

My good Sisters, throw a stone in the air. It will go as high as the force that threw it was stronger than its weight – when the force that threw it becomes weaker, it begins to fall to the earth with a speed proportioned to the height it had attained. Here is a weak person: if we don't push her towards the Good Lord, she will fall. That's why, if virgins and persons consecrated to God fall, they fall to the bottom of hell – and if it were deeper they would go. Why? They had been on the heart of our Lord.

**It's astonishing that, the closer we are to our Lord in the spiritual order, the greater the temptations, and the stronger the passions become.** Sometimes we find ourselves at the bottom of the abyss, and then we rise to the heights of heaven. Where does this come from? So that we will be humble. The Good Lord balances the scales – one side goes up, the other goes down. We could be lost on the very bosom of God if we were not humble. As St. Paul said, hearing the secrets of heaven in his revelations: *that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan to beat me* (2 Cor 12:7). He had horrible temptations. Why? He had gone up to the third heaven. Do not be surprised if now you are close to the Good Lord, and at other times you are so wretched that you deserve to be expelled – these are two extremes. That's the point. You must not imagine that you will always be spiritually stable. St. Aloysius of Gonzaga had reached that point with the help of grace and circumstances. This is not true of us. Through grace a few saints attained such equanimity. Excuse my

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<sup>1</sup> Numéro 415. *Il faut sortir de soi pour entrer en notre Seigneur.*

<sup>2</sup> **This instruction completes the teaching found in the preceding conference on Detachment.**

saying this: we are like those poor chickens in the farm yard that don't fly very high – they have wings, but they don't have the habit of flying.

**My Sisters, do not be surprised if the grace of God purifies you,** makes you feel your weakness, so that you will not be proud of the graces God gives you. There is nothing more humiliating than when we want to make a good adoration, and, having barely made the sign of the cross, all the devils show up: our heart becomes dry, our will rebels. Perhaps we had promised ourselves too much; there was some self-interest involved – you had told yourself: I will make a good adoration. The Good Lord loves you very much, and he said: I will place you at my feet, in the dust. Self-love does not like to be there.

**Do you understand where all this leads?** Every time the Good Lord surprises you and leaves you dry, you are more perfect – you are in the grace of your nature: you are there at his feet – our Lord wanted it that way. When you are very recollected, it is pure love that gives itself to you: the Good Lord is lifting you. He humbles you so that, when you are lifted up, you will not imagine that you are queens at his table. You needed it: remember that the Good Lord puts you there – you would not choose it yourself. If we did not know that this state gives glory to God, we would give up Communion and adoration. If your self-love is humbled, if your pride is offended, the Good Lord will come to you, and tell you: You are there at the bottom of the pit: wait for me – we will be there together.

The Holy Spirit said that *the greater you are, the more humble you must be* (cf. Mt 23:11). The Good Lord really tries to keep us humble. I respect you, I value your virtue – but you would not choose certain humiliations that leave you empty before the Good Lord, like a beast of burden (cf. Ps 72:22): it would be against your self-love, against your will. Whether you like it or not, you will remain there.

[...]

Remember that graces are not punishments: the Good Lord is purifying you – he wants to make you pure and white to invite you to his table. **Therefore, this is a grace of purification.** He wants to bring you higher. You have an abscess that he wants to lance. **Accept it with gratitude.** How good is the Good Lord! You don't notice the variety of your states – you are too busy. If someone told you: Sister, you will tell me each time that your state changes during the day. If I told you that, I would be giving you the greatest penance – you could not tell me: your states change like the wind. Why? The Good Lord does this to vary your acts of virtue. You are not aware of it. When this becomes a bit heavy, you lament, because most of your states are states of testing and purification. We desire to enter in, to go further. Where does the Good Lord want to lead us? He is freeing and detaching you – from the world: that's easily done – but from yourselves.

Now, my poor Daughters, were you to examine yourselves during your adorations, during your Communions, you would be amazed at how little you think of our Lord for himself. I give you a headache by repeating that you should come out of yourself, that you should not behave like mercenaries. Well, my Sisters, I'll give you a proof.

**Have you noticed your distractions when you go before the Good Lord?** Where is your heart, where are your thoughts? Don't you see how your mind is wandering? You constantly have to recall it from the world, from your memories. A sister will do the cooking during adoration – I ask pardon from the sister cook; another will compose letters or be busy with her work – don't you see that you are busy with your work before the Good Lord? If the Good Lord had a little self-love, he would tell you: My good daughter, you are foolish: you have hardly said good-morning, when you start talking about the kitchen, sweeping, and ironing. If you were women of the world, I would tell you that you are talking about your make-up. See where your mind is going, your interior life. If you wandered ten times in one hour, why does this happen? – It happens in spite of me. – You are not recollected, then? – Not at all. – And your heart: where is it? The heart follows the mind – it follows a fool.

**I will go further: when you are more recollected, what do you tell our Lord?** You talk about your faults – there are so many – about your temptations and your sufferings. That’s better: you are in the category of Christians who are beginners, poor unhappy sick people who have an audience – that’s very good. Those thoughts, as I told you, take the greatest part of your adoration: you talk about your relatives. What are you doing? Requesting: I see someone who is imploring, but I do not see a loving adorer. What will happen? Every time you spend too much time talking about yourself, you will become agitated. If you talk about your sins, there are some ugly sins that may make you sad; if it’s your ingratitude, you will become sad and discouraged. You are in a fog; can you see the sun?

**That’s the point: we talk too much to our Lord about ourselves.** That’s fine for people who simply make their Easter duty, and who don’t know how to speak to our Lord about himself. But you – adorers, different from any religious in the world: I challenge you to find adorers who spend more time in adoration than you, neither the adorers of Rome, nor of Paris – are you, therefore, in a school of self-love? If you wanted to be zealous, what would happen? If you want to speak about your friends and your relatives, you will succeed in boring our Lord – but, can’t you see that this is a distraction? A single word leads you into distractions: it makes you remember certain things, and you say: I have to pray for those close to me. You are being foolish. Does a queen who has sick relatives proceed to tell the king when the king already knows it? Doesn’t the Good Lord know that you have a family?

**My good Daughters, you must get out of yourselves. Where is your gratitude?** When suffering under the weight of your faults – there must be some – you will become overexcited and agitated. What illusions we have! If all the pious women in the world were gathered, they would say: That’s me, alright! How few there are who want to make the sacrifice of themselves to arrive at our Lord! I will begin with all my faults in order to correct myself – something might happen. That’s very ugly. **Begin with our Lord, through adoration and reparation: you will reach intercession,** and you will be respectful and polite. Again, we often waste our adoration hours: we don’t begin with the master – we place ourselves in our prison. What must we do? Get out of yourselves.

They say that it is good manners to get out [of yourself], not to pay attention when the conversation is about you, to change the topic – that must be divine good manners. If that requires a sacrifice, we can offer it – let us begin with the Good Lord. I noticed that all the adorations that begin with others, with works of zeal, are half wasted when in adoration you are more concerned with them, than with God. Wait until the Good Lord tells you: What are you asking for your family? That’s an indication that he wants to grant you everything. **Begin with our Lord, with his truth – that’s all I wish for you. Thus, you will attain true recollection.** I will talk about that next time.