

# We Should Start With Love<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Paris, Tuesday, May 7, 1861

[...]

My Sisters, let us talk about an important question. I told you that the Virgin Mary had her center in the divine Eucharist. First, I should have told you that the Eucharist was her source of life. I will talk about that today.<sup>2</sup>

## **There are two ways of achieving perfection.**

Imagine perfection on a high mountain. A Christian is told, you have to climb the mountain of God. There are difficulties and sacrifices as we climb; we slip and fall. There are so many difficulties on the way to perfection! Another one says, this is too long; I will succeed only at the end of my life. Instead, he uses wings and flies. **The first one walks**, exercising virtues, working out perfection to the smallest detail. This is long, very long, walking slowly and reaching perfection only at the end of one's life. **The other is Saint John**, the beloved disciple; he flies like an eagle (cf. Rv 4:7) with the wings of love. He goes to the summit of the mountain to contemplate our Lord Jesus Christ. How beautiful he is. Kind and loving! He converses with him, and learns what he did for mankind. He wants to know him, serve him, and love him. He begins by looking at him, and then he loves him and offers himself to him. Once the eagle of love has contemplated our Lord Jesus Christ, he says, I saw and I loved him. Now I will work for him. He comes down like Moses from Mt. Sinai (cf. Ex 34:29), filled with the glory of God, for he has seen God.

Notice how Jesus treats some people: **Do you want to practice the virtues in detail?** Go step by step. Mercenaries work out their own reward for the sake of paradise, where the Good Lord is. Of course, God cannot be away from heaven. To others, however, he says: *If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven* (cf. Mt 19:21). He will be their reward. Our Lord begins here. **How did he draw his disciples?** He started with love. The Word made flesh is no other than love made flesh, love incarnate. He starts with love. All that he said, he said out of love; all that he did is the fruit of love. He was gradually revealing himself, and once known naturally he would ask to be loved.

**What did he do for the twelve whom he admitted to his intimacy?** He allowed them to get to know him. Imagine! A God who befriends a man (cf. Jn 15:15). Earlier, he had cared for them: when he asked, Were you hungry; did you lack clothing, etc? They answered: *“Nothing”* (cf. Lk 22:35). This is their witness, but it is not sufficient. When he wants them to be his apostles, men of action, everything changes. After showing them his love, he gives them love; the Eucharist. It is the fire that must be eaten – the divine fire that nourishes and warms us. Once eaten, it is a love commitment. He had not spoken about love before, because the disciples were too rude – they were gathering everything for their own glory.

**Note the discourse at the Last Supper!** It seems that our Lord was no longer the same. The sermon on the mountain is the beginning and this is the end, heaven and earth. Why do I say that? Our Lord gave heaven to his disciples, substantial love, himself. He said: *As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.* (cf. Jn 15:9). Were the disciples idiots, stupid, that they did not know enough to respond, *we love you.*

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<sup>1</sup> Number 321. *If faut partir de l'amour*

<sup>2</sup> He talks about Our Lady of the Cenacle

I would have criticized them – or rather I would have done like them! They should have answered something, but all were silent. They did not know what to say.

Our Lord continued: *If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.* (cf. Jn 15:10) The words “my love” mean more than ordinary love. Perhaps you don't understand; the disciples didn't understand either. All that was needed was a response of love. Our Lord continues, however: *You are my friends if you do what I command you.* (cf. Jn 15:14) This is the language of love. *Remain in my love*, and he ends with: *Father, I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be so completely one (that the world will realize that it was you who sent me, and that I have loved them as much as you loved me).* (Jn 17:22-23) Can you see the fulfillment of love? Love tends to unity. The disciples started to understand this, since they wrote it down.

**Our Lord first says, Love me. He always starts with love.** Notice the first conversion, (the sinful woman), she cries out of love; she then stands up with a heart crowned with glory. Our Lord said: *she showed great love* (cf. Lk 7:47). He does not speak about her sins, love ignores all that. He does not tell her what to do, for this is not what she needs. Love simply says, I love; love me.

Love has its own law, and Magdalene understood it. She broke all her bonds, put aside vanity and worldly ways, and followed our Lord as a fervent and devoted disciple. (cf. Lk 8:12; Jn 19:25; 20:1) Who told her to act that way? It was not our Lord, but love. Love produces beautiful conversions! Other conversions are only those of prisoners and galley slaves, out of fear of punishment.

Look at St. Peter. In order for him to become the head of the Church, our Lord said: *Peter do you love me? Feed my lambs.* The shepherd gives his life for his flock. *You love me; do you love me more than these others?* Love wants to be supreme, but it should be humble. St. Peter answers the second question; he did not answer the first one (sic), and our Lord says: *Look after my sheep, all the faithful.* Then a third time, he asks: *Do you love me?* Peter cries and understands that he had renounced his master three times; remembering this triple renunciation, he starts to cry: *Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.* He cries because love should have tears. *Feed my sheep, the shepherds and the faithful!* (cf. Jn 21:15-17) This is the mission of love. Our Lord starts by asking for an act of love, sends him out without detailing what he should do. Should he have said, Govern the shepherds and the faithful? Love will be your law; it will tell you all you must do. Indeed, love told him, and St. Peter became a giant. Our Lord does not give him any law other than the law of love. Love is the master teacher.

Look at St. Paul. He came from afar as a persecutor and blasphemer. our Lord pursued him and converted him on the way to Damascus. He actually teaches him; giving him more than a ray of love as Paul himself claims: *It was Jesus Christ who instructed me, not Cephas nor any of the apostles; I remained only fifteen days in Jerusalem* (cf. Gal 1:15-19). In another chapter he says, *he loved me, and gave me his love* (cf. Gal 2:20). When the sun is shining, there is no need for candles. Love is that sun. The way of Jesus Christ starts with love. He shows his loveableness, in order to demand love.

**Here is the conclusion.** Love is the starting point for a Servant of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Our Lord loved me, so I must love him. Since love is active, I must work for him. Since love is compassionate, I must please him. Since love is interior, I must work with him. Since love wants union of life, I must live with him. There is no middle course, my dear Sisters; start with love. How will this happen? Study carefully the love of our Lord, what made him speak and act. Delve deeply into his interior motivations.

**Your meditations, longings, and readings are only in pursuit of that love.** Wood is gathered only to light a fire. Reading, listening and practicing virtues are like collecting wood for the fire. Everything

feeds this fire. Once it is set, we plunge into it; we become fire. Understand how good it is to start with love. The soul exclaims, How much our Lord has loved me! How can I value my small works, my petty ideas! What are my minor sufferings compared to eternity? What are these compared to the sufferings of the dying Lord, present in the Eucharist? They don't even deserve the name of sufferings. **Let this be the starting point: our Lord lives and sacrifices himself in the Eucharist. If you understand this, you have everything.**

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**Points for reflection:**

This conference is basic to understand the spiritual path proposed by our Founder. Meditate on it. Consider the biblical models proposed here. Make practical application to your own way of thinking.