

You Come from God¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Paris, Friday, September 30, 1859²

We must thank the Good Lord for sending servants, we must thank the heavenly Father for sending adorers for his divine Son. The heavenly Father calls them, and Jesus Christ receives them: ***No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*** (cf. Jn 6:44) Quite evidently, the Father must be the one to form a court for his divine Son. What is surprising is that the vocations that we were expecting and hoping for do not come; if they do come, they bring us headaches. The Good Lord does not want to depend on anyone for vocations: those that we don't know will come.

When I think that there were two or three priests who were supposed to come. One told me that he had to make a short trip and that he would return; even after asking us to prepare his room, he never showed up. A friend from Toulon wrote that he would come. He stayed with his bishop. He came to see me two and a half years ago, and he found everything so poor that he was frightened, he does not admit of any responsibility; he wrote that he would come with the permission of his bishop. I had a chance to meet his bishop who was in agreement and told me, I will give him to you if he asks me. The priest wrote and said that he had not yet made the request, because he wants to reflect and he's very busy. He never returned. Two weeks ago he wrote that he was going to make a retreat to make a final discernment about his vocation. He will bury it. We need dedicated men... There are still two others: one had a message sent to me from afar, and I never heard from him again. Those who go searching and hesitate don't come. This is understandable, because strength is needed. A priest arrived from Angers, made a retreat and all seemed well. Immediately after his retreat he came to see us; it appealed to him, but he did not write anymore. It was the same with the small priest. The old priest who was fifty-seven years old first came when I was in Rome, and he was not accepted³.

We must thank God and ask him for the graces they need to remain faithful. **To enter is good, but to be faithful is more important.** Because I have been so disappointed, I am very pleased when I hear they are coming, but when they arrive, that is the end of my joy. I feel foolish and tell the Good Lord, I should be very happy, but instead, I quickly notice what is lacking. If I desire something, when it comes I'm not happy because the Good Lord does not want it. We should find satisfaction, not in our work, but in the grace of God's blessing. May God preserve us from anything else. I love persons very much under the aspect of their service of the Lord. I would be very happy to see him well served. When I receive new aspirants, I'm afraid they will not be faithful or that they will not take care of their vocation. That deadens my delight in receiving them.

¹ All the instructions of this book are taken from the *Instructions to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament*, St. Peter Julian Eymard, Complete Edition, Rome, 2003. In the *Books*, certain titles have been modified to correspond better to the content of the extracts that have been retained, or again to correspond better to the idea that guided the choice of these texts. However, in a footnote at the bottom of the page, we will always include the numbers and titles corresponding to the complete edition. This first instruction has the following number and title: # 180. *Vous venez de Dieu.*

² This instruction was chosen because it gives some idea of the early problems and allows us to appreciate the work of God and the perseverance of the first sisters during these years of foundation.

³ Omitted in Guillot: *The old priest who was fifty-seven years old first came when I was in Rome, and he was not accepted.*

God knows when his time will come, and men will come. We were accused of a major offense by accepting Marseilles without anyone to send there. Fr. Hermann began to look at us coldly, saying that we accepted Marseilles when we did not even have sufficient personnel for Paris. When the time came, our Lord sent them. I don't want to answer that. A certain prudence is needed when things are done through human means alone. Since the Good Lord wants both grace with natural means, we need to work while relying on his grace. When we build, we need something to start with. But when the Good Lord wants a foundation, we must go ahead. We are very sure that it's his will, we know it; he will indeed send the men. **When God wants a goal, he wants the means.** He wants to teach us a lesson: our Lord will do everything, not ourselves. That would be very unfortunate.

In the past, I mentioned something that perhaps you did not understand. When a project or a person has a single grace of vocation, of blessing from God [...], she can always say, the Good Lord wants this. Grace is there. The Good Lord wants this, and we cannot deny that we have this grace, and a thousand other graces. We see it, even after trials and difficulties, etc.; anything might happen, but grace remains. And, my Sisters, you would not be here if you had not received this grace, if you merely had the blessing of the Holy Father, and you had not come here to sacrifice yourselves, to live as you do. You have received the greatest of all graces. **You come from God; where else could you have come from?** You don't come from the world; it would not have sent you. Did you send yourself? No, human nature does not go to Calvary, although it's fine when God places us there. You did not come because of me. I did tell you to come, that's true; but I tested you beforehand.

Where did the first idea come from? From God. The first inspiration? From Holy Communion.

A fire intensifies when it is fed; what had been your desire and pleasure has now become a necessity. It is not because of me that you came, nor anybody else. If you came because of any creature, your vocation would be merely human. You came from God; you can feel it – have no doubt. You started with us, and you were with us on the first day with our Lord on Calvary where all the orders were represented with all their graces. The Blessed Virgin was there as the mother of all religious communities; St. John represented them because he had love; St. Magdalene represented the penitential orders, while Mary of Salome and the holy women represented the congregations of charity. All religious communities were already present, as well as yourselves. An undertaking like a major religious body must have two arms: the priests and the virgins. It needs these to be perfect. **You came to our side, in order to be, so to speak, near the Cenacle, to live the same life,** the same love of our Lord. There is probably no other religious group of women like this in Paris.

On the very day when we received our approval in the apostolic brief, the Sovereign Pontiff also signed your petition. We were together. You come from God, from the Church. From the day of your institution, the Sovereign Pontiff gave you the first written approval. Although not solemn, this is the approval of authority. Formerly, that was all that was given. You come from God, you are only for Jesus Christ. You are not meant for anyone else. No one commands you, nor divides you, nor distracts you. You belong to no one except to Jesus Christ, like his family, like his spouses. The world ignores you; good works don't disturb you. You have the only thing necessary, which is what Mary was doing when our Lord told Martha: *She has chosen the better part; she listens to me, she loves me, she adores me* (cf. Lk 10:42). This is a great consolation.

It is not nice to be unhappy or to complain, especially when there are no divisive activities that require you to go to God through your neighbor by means of apostolic work. You can be easily distracted by the things of the world. It is better to avoid them completely, if you are not forced to get involved in them. Keep your freedom. When you are formally established and can take a religious habit, you will be strong. Episcopal authority may at first wish to involve you in some apostolic work. You will be known publicly once the tree is strong enough to withstand storms and to bear fruit. Stay close to God and

continue here, in the heaven of Calvary. Whatever may be your trials and sufferings, remember that our Lord did not remain on Calvary. Undoubtedly, in order for you to be formally established, you must live a long time near the tabernacle. Because of this sinful body, you long for heaven, to belong completely to God, through Jesus Christ.

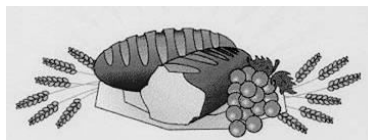
Here are three beautiful thoughts: we come from God, we belong to God, and we are going to God.

We are proceeding along the shortest route, Jesus Christ our way, our truth, and our life (cf. Jn 14:6). Some saints have taken the long road, the road of the virtues, but our road is Jesus Christ. I don't want to see you die, you are so few. However, I would like to be present to see the death of a virgin. She must have a beautiful death, since life has been so beautiful here. When the sun goes down at the end of a beautiful day, there is a colorful sunset with the sky on fire and the earth tinged with gold. This is magnificent! This is similar to a soul that lies down at the feet of God and remains there up to her last breath. What a beautiful moment! We must not sleep before our time; God has counted even to the last minutes. I hope you are not yet ready to sleep, for you have much light to bring⁴, much work to do. It is not when you enter heaven that you will do penance, it's then time to say thank you – but while still on your journey, you can be sorry for not having enough of those thorns that change into diamonds, and for not having enough humility, mortification, and the many beautiful virtues that bloom for eternal life.

None of our members have died yet. We've just started; the Good Lord does not want to take us yet, since we've barely come to be. Whenever the Good Lord wills! I see that the apostles grew old; except one, St. James, who lived a while in Jerusalem and even went to Spain. St. Peter was very old; St. Paul was old; St. John lasted about a century.

This morning I was saying that I'm forty-eight years old. Were I to live another twenty years, I would be sixty-eight. If I were a saint, what good I could do, what good dispositions and holy thoughts I would have. If only I could be like so and so, another twenty years and I would be very good, I would see the blessing of God on the Society. God will see it; the first ones are not destined to have that joy, except the joy of the cross. There must be plenty of watering with their sweat and blood. Others will enjoy less, but they will find houses with servants there. This did not cost them anything. They are like soldiers who arrive at the barracks [after the battle], like when people sleep after having faced a shipwreck. They are surprised, and their gratitude is greater because of the dangers through which they passed. We will not have this consolation. We can suffer a little more, so that our Lord may be glorified later a little more. That's the consolation we are hoping for.

If I suffer, there is one more rose, one more degree of love until the end of the world, and our Lord will have one more crown. Let's suffer a little. But [if you say], my reward will be greater, my crown will be more beautiful. God forbid! That's not what I want. A fire that goes back on itself would be unthinkable. True love gives the crown to our Lord, for his greater glory; that he may be loved, praised, and adored, and that we might extend his kingdom a little more, and that we might crush the head of fifty thousand demons. When we serve our Good Master, he does not allow us to work for nothing. He is not like those little ones who cannot give anything. With a little courage, let's keep going and do good. If sometimes you see death, tell him: It's not time yet. Go and take your orders (commands); you must suffer a little more.



⁴ Guillot, variant: you have *also* much light to bring

Points for reflection:

This conference was chosen to give some idea of the difficulties at the beginning, and allow us to appreciate the work of God and the perseverance of the first sisters.

- a) Tell the story of your own vocation, along with the circumstances in the lives of some persons who abandoned their idea of a vocation.
- b) What is the story of the foundation of your own Province/Region?
- c) Do you know some of its challenges and difficulties?