

# Adoration of Recollection: Exercise, Silence, and Victimhood<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Paris, Tuesday, May 6, 1862

Now, my Sisters, we will talk about the adoration of recollection. This is the best kind. We must come back to it often and ask the Lord for its grace.

## **There are three kinds of adoration of recollection.**

**The practice of adoration.** We practice all the acts that are part of adoration. This can be called a difficult adoration. We seek with difficulty as though we had lost our Lord. Our Lord also seems to be hiding. We do not see him; like Magdalene searching for our Lord in the excitement of love (cf. Jn 20:11-18), but with a virtue that was too active. She was uneasy, she could not see him, and she merely kept on crying and practicing external virtues. This happens when we approach our Lord looking for him under the influence of some human emotion; we are restless. My good Sisters, I'm not saying that we should not search for the Good Lord, especially when feeling weak and sad. I know very well that the Lord notices our good will. He allowed St. Magdalene to search for him, with her love spurring her on. After a while he took pity on her. That is what the Good Lord ordinarily does: he allows us to search for him nervously; later on, he will console us with a word, calling us. Strangers search noisily, without restraint. Domestic helpers speak loudly, while the children search quietly. Search as they do, with your heart.

**There is another kind of adoration that I find in the gospel: the adoration of the holy women.** After the Resurrection, they left mount Calvary and joined the apostles. They reported that angels had spoken to them. They returned to the sepulcher, not excited like Magdalene, but happy. Our Lord appeared to them. These holy women fell to their knees, kissed his feet, and adored him on their knees (cf. Mt 28:9-10). That is a good adoration. Put yourselves in their place. What should we do? Adore his feet that had been pierced, kiss the wounds, adore them, and see the fire, the charity, the love, and the light that shines from them. After having adored him, thank our Lord; he had been searching for you with such charity and patience. Listen to him – for just being at his feet is to listen. Listen in silence, without saying a word.

**This adoration of silence is the most perfect,** the most tender. We offer ourselves to the Lord in the silence of adoration: it is the most perfect. The soul is there at the spring of living water, feasting on the Good Lord. In this adoration of silence, the soul finds great joy. It is all the more recollected, since this recollection is not forced – a forced recollection is painful, while this one is accompanied by peace. The result of this union is that the soul goes out of itself to be in silence before God. I encourage you to make this adoration of silence often.

The holy women did not say like Magdalene: *My Good Master!* (cf. Jn 20:16) When they saw him they fell at his feet without saying anything – they were happy; they were listening to him. My Sisters, have you perhaps imitated them sometimes? That's good. Place yourself at the feet of the master, like a good servant waiting for his word: be happy to see him. Since grace always desires to perfect its state, that state will soon pass. You will enter into a sort of slumber. Aim for that. Learn to be quiet rather than to speak; to look at our Lord, to kiss his feet, and his hands if you wish. You become so involved, that the mind has nothing more to do; that's essential. In adoration the mind may distract us, because it has

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<sup>1</sup> Number 412. *L'adoration de recueillement, d'exercice, de silence, de victime.*

nothing to do. When the heart is attached to our Lord, the mind becomes sleepy, as it were, drowsy. The mind is like a child: if you pay attention to it, it becomes excited, jumping here and there. If you don't pay attention to it, it remains quiet.

**What I am talking about is contemplation, adoration of union.** When you have experienced it, you will know its consolation. But you don't enjoy it like we do [the Fathers]. Day adoration has a few moments of silence, but they are rare. There is so much noise; people moving here and there. At night things are different, especially after a little sleep, like at midnight, or one o'clock. Besides, God rewards us when we go wholeheartedly, when we offer him a little sacrifice, if we are cold, or a little warm, or we had not slept – the Lord certainly compensates for these sufferings. Ah! My Sisters, believe me: work more in silence at our Lord's feet, rather than in the grace of activity. Our Lord will accomplish more than you do or desire.

**Our Lord is within us because of our recollection within.** That is why he seems distant if we are not well recollected. If we are deeply recollected, he works with all his power, for he finds the necessary conditions in which to work. You might say: That does not depend on us. Yes, recollection of virtue depends on us. If you are recollected for four or five minutes, you have gained that much. You are practicing silence; you are entering into recollection. These five minutes in an hour will benefit you more than the entire hour. You will draw water, and drink. I encourage you to practice recollection of virtue. And, when you experience the recollection of grace, you must also practice it, so that it will become a recollection of love, of merit. How I wish, therefore, that you be near the Lord! You will be there only through this means – so that you will be true daughters of prayer.

**What is the characteristic of recollection?** This is how you will recognize it: when you experience it only slightly, you are just in the preparatory stage. But, what I call the characteristic of recollection is when one is more in our Lord than in himself, when he enters into one of the thoughts that grace suggests to him. This leads to this great union that I am speaking about. But for an active temperament, this may seem like laziness. Ah! My good Daughters, this is the greatest activity that you can perform. Work hard to get there. It is not laziness – far from it. It is a very liberating and delicate state. The devil quickly urges us to recite vocal prayers, to mumble *Our Fathers* and *Hail Mary's* and rosaries. Do we pay attention to what we are saying? No. We become feverish and agitated.

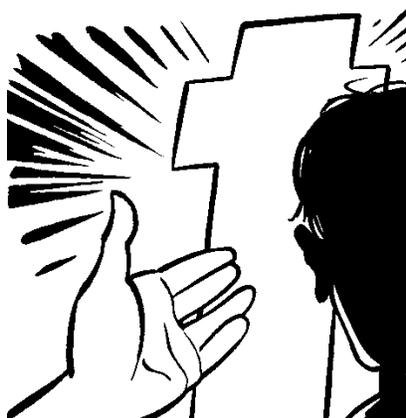
Consider nature: great things happen in calm and silence. It is in the calm of night that nature acts with greater power, not during the day; the night is calmer and quieter: God purifies things during nighttime, like the atmosphere. God always works when things are calm. When the wind blows we shield our eyes in order to see. When a person is healthy, his pulse is slower and more regular. The deepest sleep is that of a child – he seems to be dead. It is in times of peace that great things are done.

**There is a third adoration that is even more perfect: an adoration of love.** It is more perfect than the one I just described, an adoration of victimhood, or self-immolation, if I can use that word. The soul desires to waste away. It senses all that it owes to God, as though tending to go out of its body to glorify the Lord. There is a very gentle violence in this sacrifice of the soul. It resembles the candle that consumes itself, like a flame that burns, and like an angel sacrificing itself before God. This is what the Lord deserves. But we cannot enter here by our own power; generally, God will lead us there. If the soul is not generous, it will not enter.

Take note of what our Lord says: *When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself* (cf. Jn 12:32). Notice a needle flying towards a magnet, drawn by force and violence. Our Lord attracts us, longs for us. If we cooperate with this grace, our Lord places us in himself. **But, you might ask, how does this happen?** I cannot explain it. It is the pouring out of our soul into God; our soul wants to do something for him, to take our lives and hearts to sacrifice them to the Good Lord. And the soul that

dwells in this pure love does not think of itself. If it does, it comes out of it, and it is no longer contented. You have experienced a hundred times this outpouring of your soul into our Lord, my poor Daughters. You had no doubt about it, not at all. The actions of God are felt, but we cannot define them. There is no discussion: we simply say: The Lord is good. Look, we cannot attract heavy objects, but light ones, like feathers and dust that fly about. Ah! My Daughters, let's get rid of our leaden nature that draws us to the earth, and prevents us from being light. Free yourself completely; as you do so, you will experience happiness. The Good Lord desires nothing more than to unite us to himself, that is his desire.

Think, my poor Daughters, we can ask: What are heaven, hell, and purgatory? Our Lord is truly putting forth much effort, as though he were not God, by attracting, encouraging, calling on his angels and saints – we might say that our Lord lives for each one alone: and he does for all what he does for only one. When we see how our Lord attracts one man, by making him the goal of his Church, of his Sacrament, we could say that he lives only for this man. The reason is that the Good Lord does not want us to go to hell, he does not want us to be punished in purgatory, and he always wants to purify us. Truly, he is worse than a wet-nurse or a mother whose eyes are fixed constantly on her little child. It seems that we are worth more than himself, since he dedicates himself entirely to our sanctification, to receive our love. People don't want him: they are not pure; they are too crude, too sensual. **And what does God want? To give himself completely to us, providing that we give him what we are.**



### **Points for reflection:**

Three kinds of adoration are presented here:

1. The practice of acts of adoration. 2. The adoration of silence. 3. The adoration of victimhood. (or the adoration of love)

For each of these, he gives examples drawn from the Gospels and from everyday life; this is a real instruction on prayer and contemplation. What idea of God does our Founder give us? What images does he use to describe various experiences of God and of prayer? What Gospel texts does he use? What stages in the life of prayer does he describe?

Choose one thought, and make it the basis of your prayer for a few days.