

## Be Happy in Your Vocation<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,  
Paris, Friday, February 14, 1862

**My Sisters, be very happy in your vocation.** I tell you to be very happy, not virtuous. The Good Lord has so arranged things that one can be happy when in one's proper place, both in the order of nature as well as the order of grace. A healthy person will be happy. One who is faithful to God's grace will be happy. After all, God wants to share his happiness. He shows his pleasure by the joy we experience in this life, as in heaven. I can see that he shows his pleasure to the elect by sharing his glory and happiness with them. That's the way God acts to reward his good servants. He makes them contented and happy.

In this life, God also rewards his servants by a happiness that is not the same as that of heaven, but very real nonetheless. The happiness of earth is one of life and peace. One feels safe with God. And this gives rise to a feeling of happiness and strength, of well-being. This does not mean that the happiness that God gives as a reward to his servants is like what he gives to the saints in heaven. No. This is not perfect health, complete happiness at every moment. The Good Lord gives perfect happiness to the superior part of the soul. **This happiness can co-exist with crosses and trials**, and anything else. It is even made perfect by these trials. In heaven, however, there are no tears, no groaning, and no sorrow; nothing like that is any longer possible (cf. Rev 21:4).

**Do you know what makes happiness?** It is complete union with the will of God, fulfilled in us. Since it happens in us, it communicates to us the happiness of God. When one is happy, this is positive proof that this person is at peace with God. Unhappiness signifies something wrong, some ailment. The sinner is never happy, never experiences peace of soul. Self-love does not bring happiness, only the satisfaction that animals have.

**The just person has a serenity that no one can take away from him.** Even trials will be accepted with joy. While always painful on the outside, they don't affect ultimate love, so one remains happy. As I told you earlier, joy lies in conformity with the will of God. This joy resides in the depths of the soul. This happiness persists even in times of temptation and persecution, of loss and sickness and even death, because we can be sure that **this is what the Good Lord wants**. This is the fruit of unity between God's will and the soul's will. As I said earlier, happiness is in the will of God. If I simply said that this happiness rests in God, you might not understand. More specifically, it resides in the will of God.

What is mysterious in this happiness is that the Good Lord found the secret of bringing tears on the one hand, and joy on the other, tears in the eyes and joy in the heart. Only the Good Lord can make these two things exist together. As St. Paul said: *Despite my many afflictions my joy knows no bounds* (cf. 2 Cor 7:4); because the Good Lord wanted it, and so did Paul for the glory of God.

**You might ask: Are the saints, then, always happy?** Yes, always. In heaven, their union with the will of God is perfect, a perfect union free from any imperfection; they are always happy. You might say, but I am not always happy. – The conclusion is that you don't love the Good Lord. – Sometimes I am happy. – Then the Good Lord loves you very much. This means that you have allowed a cloud to cover the sun, and so you feel cold. You cannot commit sins or imperfections without creating a little ice that makes you suffer. Venial sin is a sickness of the soul and of the body – when we suffer, we are not happy – and this leads to another suffering: the soul becomes sad, aware that the Good Lord is not near to her, not in

---

<sup>1</sup> Number 392. *Soyez bien heureuses dans votre vocation.*

her heart, but in her feelings. When a venial sin comes between him and us, a little ice prevents the Good Lord from approaching.

**Does that mean that the saints are always in jubilation?** Yes, because the Good Lord is always reigning in them. The Holy Scriptures say: *Anima justi jube convivium – The soul of the just has a continual feast* (cf. Prv 15:15). You know what a feast is in the world: it is a time of joy. The soul of the just is always at the table of our Lord, well served as in heaven; and this feast is joy and rapture at the same time. – I don't feel that. – You're not a saint. – I want to be. – Then become one and you will experience what I'm talking about.

The saints are always in full joy. Let's be clear; their happiness is in the soul, not in the body. Now, the soul is divided in two parts: **the feeling soul**, which may not be happy; **and the loving soul**, a kingdom where no one can go; there the soul is happy! The rest can suffer: oftentimes the Good Lord abandons it, while concentrating more on this nobler part. The feeling soul is like a child that has lost its mother: it cries and grieves, while the body, no longer seeing the queen that is its soul, becomes discouraged and animal like.

**Saints have many temptations.** We don't know them, and cannot see them in the lives of the saints. When we come to know some of them, we learn the way they passed. All this is on the surface, while the depths are quiet. A storm never reaches the bottom of the sea. The depths of the soul are never disturbed, because it is resigned to the will of God. It is willing to be in that storm and sees a thousand depths. If you want it, so do I; if you want me to die, long live death!

Do you think that this is difficult? Not at all. You only have to will what the Good Lord wills, to put aside your own will, the "I". I often say: I would like to be a piece of wood with my own will, as a log. I would say: This is Fr. Eymard. I would place this log at the Good Lord's feet, ignite it and say: What remains will only be ashes, that's all. Soul and body work together for the glory of God.

My poor Sisters, be happy then; but don't run after happiness saying, I will do this to be happy. The Good Lord would then become the means and you the end. There are many persons like that in the world! That's why the Good Lord does not make them happy. We are always looking for happiness; we act like the apostles on Mt. Tabor: *How good it is to be here* (cf. Mt 17:4), how good it feels to pray to God. The Good Lord causes this superabundance to come over the soul, like the magnificent fragrance of a perfume. But as soon as we say that, God sees it, and there is nothing left. He says nothing, but he sees it. We must not act in that way.

**The happiness of a soul, her joy in the Holy Spirit is a proof that she is really with God.** But you must not try to produce it. I'm not exaggerating: you have it without realizing it. If the Good Lord did not give you some consolations of joy and love, you would all leave; you could not stand this kind of life. Such were the saints; the Good Lord gave them this state, because their life was a continual dying. Life flows from death and mortification. The Good Lord gives because the soul needs. If we were permitted to guide a soul by means of its consolations, we would reveal to her the degree of God's love in her. We don't mention it, because we are too careful. We simply say: The Good Lord loves you.

**We must experience this presence of the reign of God in us.** This peace is so subtle that we hardly notice it; we feel that we are alive. In a storm, God reveals himself; the soul groans when trials seem to overcome her, but what sustains it is that interior grace. What could have happened to our Lord in the Garden of Olives; he could have died there, but he says: *My Father, let it be as you would have it, not as I* (cf. Mt 26:39,41). After that, he was at peace. Happiness is not in our feelings; we must place it in the will of God. That's where happiness is, not in us.

Now, my dear Sisters, don't act like those who are always checking their pulse to know if they are happy. Realize that the more you are detached, the more our Lord will give you his holy life; the more you die, the more you will live. The *Imitation*, referring to prayerful souls, says that, if God does not communicate himself to us more often, the obstacle is in us, not in him; we are not pure enough. God draws us on one side, but on the other we are not pure enough. This causes suffering.

**You must be the happiest in the world, because you have the most beautiful of all vocations.** You receive greater graces and purer love. Without intermediary, you drink directly from the fountain of life (cf. Jn 4:10). You see and touch our Lord; he is in you. You should be happy, happy in our Lord. Make sure that no one takes this treasure away from you. If your affections are too human, you will suffer. If the Good Lord brought you to heaven for one hour, then returned you to earth with all your graces, you could no longer live because you would have been expelled from paradise. It seems that Adam wept during his entire life after he sinned, for nine hundred years.

It seems somewhat foolhardy to say, the Good Lord knows how to deal with us, to be clever with us. When a frail human being is converted, God draws him with such tender caresses that he will exclaim, I have never been so happy. The Good Lord compensates for whatever pleasure one has left behind. God lets the sun shine from time to time to lead this person to the spirit of faith. When such a one has overcome great trials or made some heavy sacrifice, manna seems to fall from the sky into the desert. As the prophet said, *the heavens melted away*, (cf. Ex 16:21). Thus the chosen one is made ready for great acts of sacrifice, while still exclaiming, How good you are, Lord!

**The Good Lord attracts us through his kindness.** He acts so that no kindness of this world could equal even one degree of the happiness from God. He does this so that all will be detached from this world, attracted to where there is greater kindness. When he prepares some great trial, *he transports to the third heaven* (cf. 2 Cor 12:2), as experienced by St. Paul, lest one may go to the depths of hell. These are beautiful moments in life; the Good Lord draws us both by our weakness and our strength. He toys, so to speak, with people. We come to know who has the most to give us.

Didn't you feel happy on some particular day or moment? The Good Lord draws us through happiness, which is according to human nature. As the sun rises to its zenith, it increases its light and heat. Even if you are not familiar with astronomy, you know that the sun does not revolve around the earth. That would require many centuries because it is so far. The sun doesn't move; the earth revolves around the sun, and also on itself. It moves in a circle: when the earth is farthest from the sun, it is winter; when closest, it's summertime. (sic) There is more daylight when it is closer. If the earth could be happy, it would be so in the summer; if it could be sad, it would be in the winter. It would seem to weep because it is frozen.

**To complete the analogy, the earth is the soul, and the Blessed Sacrament is the sun.** Approach it, in order to benefit from all its light and fecundity. Place yourself in the rays of this sun; you will have everything, like the Blessed Virgin who had the joy of enclosing him in her womb. A convalescent needs to sit in sunlight: Go to the sun to complete your healing. A plant that never sees the sun is not beautiful. You are always in the sun; live in its warmth; go closer to him and live in his light and in his warmth. The garden where God had placed Adam no longer exists; humans have been expelled from this paradise of delights., but you are in the paradise of the love of God. That's very obvious.

**What conclusion must we draw from this?** When you feel very happy, you may say: I feel comfortable with the Good Lord. Enjoy it; be grateful, and do not weep. When you are not happy, check immediately your conformity to God's will. The Good Lord is deep in your soul, hiding a little so as to give you a greater joy later on, a more spiritual joy. If you are not happy, you are sick; you are not keeping yourself united to the will of God. What should you do? Quickly remove the cloud that prevents you from seeing the sun; make a quick act of love; get back in line. Do you know what that line is? It's the place closest

to the sun, where there is no shadow, because the sun is directly overhead. To be in line, place yourself directly below this sun, then you will be happy.

**Point for reflection:**

Here, Fr. Eymard reveals the secret of true happiness – a happiness that no one can take away from us. What lesson do you want to draw from this? How does this correspond with your own experience?