

Christmas ¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Friday, December 23, 1859

Here we are on the eve² of the beautiful feast of Christmas, a mystery full of sweetness and love. Here, Jesus shows himself more loveable, so to speak, than on Calvary. Enter into the dispositions of the most Blessed Virgin, waiting for the birth of her divine Son. Increase your fervor and love, remain in recollection, and unite yourself to Mary to prepare well the celebration of this beautiful feast, so that you may serve the Lord, as he wants you to serve him. Through the prophets Mary knew how Jesus would be born, all he would suffer in his lifetime, and she prepared herself to serve him as he would want and to follow him everywhere. **Imitate Mary in her dedication and her love.**

It would have been natural for Jesus, the Son of God, to be born in a beautiful palace, or at least, like most children, with a certain amount of comfort, lacking nothing. The children of kings have cribs adorned in gold to receive them, surrounded by all that is most beautiful. But Jesus has nothing. He is born in a rocky grotto that served as a shelter for shepherds. Mary and Joseph are forced to go there, having been rejected everywhere. St. Joseph must have suffered much in these circumstances, but Mary possessed Jesus and was happy. The head of the family must have been very concerned, trying hard to find a suitable shelter for Mary who was about to give birth to Jesus. He had asked everywhere for a place to stay, but it was useless. Even their relatives had refused to receive them. They could find no room in any inn, for fear they could not pay, since they appeared to be poor. With the approaching night and bitter cold, they took refuge in a cave. It is there that our Lord wanted to be born. That is why he allowed them to be rejected by all, to force them to go to the place he had chosen.

That is how God reaches his objective. People tend to get nervous and look for human help, when they have exhausted all means, God then leads them where he wants. So it is with us today. We do not know where God wants to lead us – where he wants to set up his tent. We search perhaps in vain. When the time comes, **God will lead us where he wills.** God allows this so that we will abandon ourselves to him, to be led like Mary and Joseph. My good Daughters, have courage. If the sun had risen and set only once, how we would have admired its beauty and glory, and how grateful we would have been to God. Our Lord is the sun of justice (cf. Mal 3:20), but he neither rises nor sets. He remains always in his brightness and glory on our altars.

My Sisters, we could not hope for more. On the contrary, now our Lord is like a father surrounded by his children. He cares for us, and we live near him, filled with confidence and abandon, without worries. Later, when we will be more numerous and settled in our own home and when divine Providence will be more generous, our love will not be the same. We may rely too much on our own resources, and not enough on God.

¹ Number 189. *Noël*.

² This conference, without date in *Esprit de la Societe* (Guillot), is classified in *S7bis* in 1858 with others without date. This is impossible, since Father was in Rome. Therefore, it is placed here in 1859, a Friday, the usual day that Father came to give his conferences. This Friday was equivalent to the eve of Christmas, since the feast would begin the following day with first Vespers. We could interpret the word “eve” in the popular understanding of “near to”.

Our Lord will never be more gracious than he is now. Here, we live as a family, and he is the father. My poor Sisters, you will never find greater happiness. Even when you will have external religious signs, you will never have so many graces. In the desert, the Israelites were happier and received more graces than in the promised land, because God was their father, He took care of them and they lacked nothing. In the promised land he was king. A king is much more gracious in the midst of his family, than when surrounded by his soldiers. Jesus was more gracious in the house of Nazareth, living with Mary and Joseph, than in his public life.



Point for reflection:

This meditation invites us to contemplate and to imitate Mary in the mystery of Christmas. How can Mary be a model for us?