

# Feast of the Holy Trinity<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Angers, Sunday, May 27, 1866

**My Sisters, today is the loftiest and most sublime feast of our religion, the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity.** All the others celebrate a particular gift of God or one of the divine persons, like the Feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the feast of Jesus Christ himself. This is the feast of the entire Trinity, the three divine persons.

Why doesn't the Church honor it with the same solemnity as the great feasts of Christmas and Easter? The simple reason is that the great feast of the holy Trinity is celebrated in heaven. We can adore the Trinity, but we cannot experience the joy we have in other feasts when our heart can relate to a tangible, physical mystery, like the Incarnation. Since this feast of the Trinity is that of the three divine persons, the Church could not solemnize it worthily. [...]

**My Sisters, let's reflect on how this feast relates to us.** Where do we come from? We were created by God, creatures flowing from his love. God created us out of love. Unlike all the other elements in the universe that he created by his power, the human race is the work of his hands. This is why we are his privileged creatures, eternal in his love. I created you from all eternity, says God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; you have always been visible in my love. We are aware that for God there is no past or present, everything is eternal in him, while we are always restricted by time. He already mentioned this through the prophet Jeremiah: *In caritate perpetua dilexi te – I have loved you with an eternal love* (Jer 31:3). Now you can understand that he always loved us, because we came from his heart, from his love. He loved us and was the first to do so (cf. 1 Jn 4:19). Evidently, he loved us before we had even had the ability and the freedom to love.

**Here's a comparison that will help you understand the gist of my thought.** An artist first conceives a masterpiece in his heart. According to Sacred Scripture, God conceived us. Is it possible that God loved us forever, never ceasing for a single moment to love us? Since I know that I am loved by God, I must be a truly noble person. In fact, when Satan offered the entire world to our Lord, whom he really did not know, in return for a single act of adoration, (cf. Mt 4:8-9) he was not giving enough. Let us not forget the source of our existence. **God decreed my existence out of positive love.** In his goodness he selected from the treasury of his mercy all the graces he would eventually give me. A mother prepares everything for the child in her womb before giving it birth. A master provides for a servant about to go on a journey.

**God loves us with a benevolent love.** This kind of love hardly exists in the world, for human love is marked by self-interest. God's love has no such need. While he had no need of us, God created us out of goodness and entirely for himself (cf. Col 1:16). This kind of love is beyond our understanding, for only God can fully grasp it. God's love has a dual foundation. First, he loved us with an infinite love that is beyond our comprehension. Secondly, his love is totally devoid of self-interest. Our love cannot rise to this level, for we proceed from death to life, from time to eternity. We long for God as needy creatures. [...] We are too imperfect.

[...]

**The holy Trinity is not merely our source of life, it is also our sanctification.** The holy Trinity had already intended to give us merits and good works the extent of which is beyond our knowledge. God

---

<sup>1</sup> Number 577. *La Fête de la Sainte Trinité*. Given in the chapel as a sermon for the occasion.

will grant us heaven as a result of such merits and fidelity. Since we are not aware of their extent, we are obliged to work. God could have dealt with us as he did with the Hebrew people, or with Adam and Eve from the very beginning. This was not his plan. God wanted to be our teacher. The heavenly Father, who engenders his Son from all eternity, wanted to raise us to the same level, not by nature but by adoption. As the Church Fathers wrote, we are no longer mere creatures but have been raised to a divine level. As soon as the holy Trinity adopted us through baptism, we became children of God, growing by grace and all the sacraments.

Notice how God has destined us to share his very glory in heaven, according to the holiness which is acquired. It happens that the holy Trinity itself desires to prepare personally its chosen ones as though only one existed on earth. Thus, the Father constantly nourishes us, incessantly engenders grace in us, and through his mercy gives us his divine Son. The Son could not give himself; he had to be sent by the Father.

I don't understand why devout Christians do not honor the Father. Very few do so. Admittedly, everything seems to focus on the Son who is the Word. **Yet, why not adore the Father, since everything comes from him?** (cf. Rm 11:36) God so loved the world that he gave it his only Son (cf. Jn 3:16), not as a loan, but as a gift, without reservation or condition. This is beyond our understanding. In the holy Trinity, the Father is the one who asked: *Who of us will go to save men?* The Word answers: *Send me.* The Father accepts the offer of the Word, as recorded by the prophet Isaiah (cf. Is 6:8), *Holocausts of the old Law were not pleasing to you; then I said: Behold I come to do your will* (cf. Ps 39:7-8). And the Father replies: *Go* (cf. Is 6:9).

**This explains both redemption and Eucharist.** Our Lord would not have instituted the Eucharist on earth unless the Father wanted it and even requested it, so as to continue the gift of mercy down to the last of the elect. St. Paul writes, *What's the use of a gift limited to only a few persons?* (cf. Rm 4:16). Such a gift is restricted<sup>2</sup>, it lacks substance. [...] A way was needed to continue the gift to the end of the world. We owe all things to the heavenly Father, since every gift flows from his loving activity (cf. Jms 1:17).

Notice that today's Christian possesses as much as the first disciples who lived with our Lord because these graces have all remained with us. Were this not so, we would have cause to complain before God. A father needs to love his children equally precisely because they are all his children. Any special favor must go to the weakest and most sickly, who cannot earn for himself. Since no one can go to the Father except through our Lord, this good Father necessarily had to love us, giving us wings from his divine Son, his shoulders to carry us forward. God is truly a Father, and more than a Father; and we reach the Father through Jesus Christ.

**See how the Church, in all its prayers,** rises to each of the three divine persons, giving glory to each one. There is a proper order, but the persons are distinct. All three are working out our sanctification.

**Now, what will be the task of the Son?** Jesus Christ has accepted the burden to redeem me and to sanctify me; he gives himself to me in a personal way. One might say: If the Father gives me Jesus Christ, I owe nothing to Jesus Christ, since it is the Father who made the gift. If the Word had not been present when the Father asked: *Who among us will go to redeem men?* we would owe him nothing. But out of love didn't he offer himself? *Here I am, send me.* He loved us then. Already we see the love of the Word offering and giving himself. In return, then, we should love him. Had he not spoken, there would be no redemption.

---

<sup>2</sup> It is limited

While the Father makes the gift, he leaves room for a free choice. It was up to the Word to decide how he would save his beloved family. Remember that the heavenly Father, while giving his Son as re-creator and savior, left him free to use whatever means he wanted, except that he had to become God-Man. He could redeem us through glory or through humiliation. If we believe St. Paul (cf. Phil 2:6-7), the heavenly Father had suggested that the Word save the world through his majestic glory, becoming the first among men and princes, as was his due. But our Lord declined. Since man had served him badly, and had sinned by pleasure, he did not want to take this way. He preferred to redeem us through the way of suffering, penance, and Calvary, by pouring out all his blood. Only then was he given the title of savior, by annihilating his own glory. The heavenly Father had not required this, perhaps did not even want it, but love goes beyond what is possible.

Notice also that Jesus Christ could have come gloriously among us as he did for the Jews, but he continued his external annihilation, wanting to give himself to us in the sacrament of Eucharist until the end of time. [...]

**Now, how does the Holy Spirit sanctify you?** My Sisters, the Holy Spirit abides in the souls of the just, our members become his members, our body, his body. He forms us, as our teacher. He applies graces to us, supernaturalizes us, makes our mind conform to the mind of our Lord. He is our master. Every devout person that loves God always has an interior grace. God was not satisfied that our formation be done by an angelic spirit. Not at all. God himself wants to form us, act as our teacher. He does not want to entrust us to a heavenly intelligence, perhaps fearing that we would give our love to someone else. The Holy Spirit is always present in us, continuing the mission of Jesus Christ. He is the one who inspires us, fashions our holiness, and inspires our prayer (cf. Rm 8:26). He even makes our adoration, but with our cooperation.

**What is a just soul?** One who loves God through the Holy Spirit, and, dare I say it, who glorifies God in him and through him. Notice in the gospel of Pentecost that our Lord says: *I will send you my Holy Spirit. He will abide in you, and be your paraclete, your consoler* (cf. Jn 14:16-17). What do you want the Savior to say? *It is better for you that I go. If I do not go, the Advocate I promised you will not come to you. He will take from what is mine and give it to you; he will give you my merits, my works, and my glory* (cf. Jn 16:7, 14). My Sisters, this is how our sanctification is done out of love.

**My Sisters, do you think that the holy Trinity is always concerned with us?** If God were not infinite, he would be totally taken up with us. If he were not God, multiplying his gifts, one might claim that the one who is redeemed is worth as much as God who is preoccupied over him. One might be in constant admiration. This thought is so great that we hesitate to delve into it: – Am I worth as much as God? – Yes, because he wants to form you in the likeness of his love. – [...] He wants to be a father, according to the words of St. Peter (cf. 1 Ptr 1:3-5). How then does he want to love us? As his own child. A father never gets tired of giving to his child.

Is this all? You may have admired, at some time, the biblical account of God sending an angel to help the young Tobiah (cf. Tb 5:4), and yearned to have been in his place. But, we have God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Tobiah did not have the person of the Holy Spirit in his heart as we do, he had only sanctifying grace of Law. We have grace within us, since the Holy Spirit abides in us, while he had grace only from above. For us, the Holy Spirit replaces the Archangel Raphael.

Let's ponder this idea. **When you are in adoration, you need not worry, since the Holy Spirit inspires your prayer** (cf. Rm 8: 26). Since he is your teacher, why not pray through him? You understand very well that if our Lord in the most Blessed Sacrament had nothing more than your adoration, it would be worth less. I say this even though I admire you. Even if you had every quality: innocence, brilliance, burning love, you would not deserve the attention of our Lord. It is worth only as much as your person,

and rises no higher than your own head. You might object, I have my graces. You are becoming holy, hopefully, but you are not glorifying God as he deserves. For that, you would need to be equal to him.

When an ordinary citizen approaches the king to praise him, what has he done? What has he given to the king? One who has unequal dignity will give praise only from below; equality of persons is necessary to be of value. You were baptized and all you do is good for your sanctification, but you do not give much glory to God. It is impossible for you to glorify him as he deserves. – But at the prie-dieu I thought I was worth the blood of our Lord. – If you have a high regard for your own sanctity, then you are not living in the spirit of self-giving; therefore, you are not glorifying our Lord as he deserves. But you will receive the Holy Spirit.

You know that the Holy Spirit is in you, interceding with inexpressible groaning of a tender love (cf. Rm 8:26). **Your prayer will be that of the Holy Spirit**, who is given to you to take your virtues and offer them to the Father, he is working out your holiness. The Holy Spirit is given you in order to form Jesus Christ in you who give yourself through him. What happens is, your adoration becomes divine, since now you have all graces and merits. You are not adoring Jesus Christ through him, but through yourself and through someone else. True worship presupposes something unusual. Since you are before a king, things have changed. You are no longer seen with all your weaknesses; marvelously, there is now an equality, and equal dignity. In heaven, when we see how the holy Trinity has worked with us, we will marvel at the mercy of God. Even the damned in hell will say, I never imagined that God loved people so much.

**What conclusion should we draw from all this?** God has arranged everything for us, since he is God and we are his poor creatures. The holy Trinity sanctifies us only to prepare us for heaven which is the glory of God who invites us into himself. We often ask, What is heaven? It is the possession of God who possesses us in his glory, in his love. **We are possessed by God like a fish in a pond without shores.** In the gospel our Lord tells us: *Be faithful in little things, for the person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones* (cf. Lk 16:10). *Well done, my good and faithful servant, come, share your master's joy* (cf. Mt 25:21). He does enter and possesses him; everything is ever new, since he enters into the eternal goodness that carries him into life, like a mother carries her children. When the father tells us, *Come, my daughter, my child*, he will receive us as a father. When we think of this in prayer, it seems like a dream; but we then shall see God, take hold of him, and enter into his joy.

Finally, God created us solely to lead us to heaven. He not only sanctifies us, but he also leads us and introduces us there. We could tell those who do not love the Good Lord what St. Paul said: *Think about the one who loved you so much that he died for you* (cf. Rm 5:8). How can you pay no attention to the one who came to save you in his mercy, since everything he ever did was for you. What a grand awakening we'll have when we enter heaven! We are God-bearers, as the martyrs used to say; we carry God. There is a manifestation of God in us.

**My brothers, this feast begins here on earth and ends up in heaven**, where God will have us enter into himself. Then we will possess him and understand him more. Since you come from God and he sanctifies you, where should you go? You are going to heaven, to paradise. You begin in faith until the time when you will really go. You act now through grace and faith what you will continue through love in heaven. This is the grace I wish for you.



**Point for reflection:**

This conference draws our attention on the creative love of the Trinity. Our God, Three and One, is the principle of our life, the source of our sanctification and redemption, the source of all good. Father Eymard contemplates the love of God for us in our creation and redemption, as well as the prayer of the Spirit in our hearts. What action of God touches you the most?