

# Joy and Love<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Paris, Friday, August 27, 1858

**My good Sisters, live in joy because joy is the fruit of love** and love is the grace of your vocation. In the beginning of the spiritual life, some people go to God out of fear of hell. That fear is not bad in itself, but it's not sufficient. Sorrow for sin must include the beginning of love in order to be forgiven. Do not remain in fear; for that would be a loss of time, but rather apply yourself to know Jesus Christ, and you will love him. The knowledge of his kindness produces love, as knowledge of beauty produces admiration.

**Seek Jesus Christ in himself and in the splendor of his Father.** (cf. Heb 1:3) To seek him within yourself would be restricting God. After Communion, you may see yourself as a living ciborium or a living Host, but look at Jesus himself and lose yourself in him. Whoever does her best to receive Communions well will, no doubt, experience that grace of love, because the infinite absorbs the finite, and the perfect, the imperfect. Just as green wood, which is hard to burn, is consumed like straw in a big forest fire, likewise, the love of our Lord will consume all your weaknesses and imperfections, and virtues will develop naturally.

**I could preach forever about humility and mortification; if you don't have love, this would be as understandable to you as a dead language.** Occasionally, you could perhaps make an act of virtue, but you need love to make it part of your life. With love, you will succeed in everything. Then, sacrifice becomes easy. The more we give, the more we want to give. The Holy Spirit says, death and hell never say *enough* (cf. Pr 30:16). The same is true of love. Like death, love always wants to destroy and immolate itself for the beloved. As hell engulfs its victims in a deep abyss, so love is unceasingly absorbed by the infinite abyss of God's love. My Sisters, why are there great saints whose lives were so short? Because they loved more. Love God for himself, and not for his gifts; such is perfect love. Unfortunately, we are very far from having that living and blazing flame which consumed the saints!

Our love is like the flame in a tiny lamp. Let us then be careful to maintain it, so that it will not blow out. My Sisters, this is actually the very grace of your vocation, the Eucharistic grace. With a powerful motor, you can move a very large object; in spite of its considerable weight, it will be carried along with speed. For example, a steam ship, moved by its engine, can travel fifteen knots an hour, almost the speed of a bird. **Put the love of Jesus in a heart and everything becomes easy.**

When a mother educates her child, she starts by breast-feeding. In this way, she communicates her virtues and vices, her character and her life. Then the child adopts her mannerisms, copying its mother in everything, loving her without knowing what love is. Likewise through the Eucharist Jesus communicates his life to us, and his life on earth was a life full of love. He told us that the greatest of the commandments is: ***You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law, and the Prophets also*** (cf. Mt 22:37-40). Before sending Peter to all the nations, Jesus asked him: *Peter, do you love me?* (cf. Jn 21:15) Finally, my Sisters, read and reread the discourse at the Last Supper according to St. John [Jn 13-16]. From start to finish, you will find there a burning fire of love. My good Sisters, love and do all that you want.

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<sup>1</sup> Number 64: *La joie, l'amour.*

It maybe that none of you have ever reflected attentively on the first verse of the first chapter of the *Imitation*. It contains a very deep lesson, and we requires a special light to understand it fully: *Anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark.* (cf. Jn 8:12)

**Points for reflection:**

Copy the verses referred to in the *Imitation* (chapter 1:1). This short instruction is full of subtle links with various aspects of spirituality. We find here the preferred themes of Saint Peter Julian: kindness, love, humility, mortification, spontaneity, and the dwelling of God within us and us in God. All these spiritual riches are weaved into a simple teaching. How are you affected by this text? Summarize in one sentence what you want to remember.

