

Joy ¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Paris, Wednesday, October 22, 1862

My Sisters, last time we talked about the first action of the day, the need to sanctify it and one's rising. **The interval from this point to the second action, which is the Divine Office,** is dangerous, especially if the mind is not under control and is left open to all impressions. These first impressions can be bad because they make the soul feverish. After resting all night, the mind is very active, and can upset the whole day. Then it is difficult to return to normal.

What is to be done? Try not to let your mind wander too much. After getting up, that prompt, modest and holy action, *keep your soul tranquil and quiet* [cf. Ps 130:2], as the prophet says. Occupy your mind. There are two reasons for this: the mind is light, fickle and tends to be scattered rather than recollected. Because this is a weak moment, the mind is more easily carried away by temptations than during the day. If one is not careful, temptation comes more readily in the morning than during the day. Awaken in yourself sentiments of joy, the happiness of serving God, the happiness of your vocation. Bring to mind the great and numerous graces that God is preparing for you. You know very well, every day is paradise for you. Is it possible that our Lord honored you so much, and called you to his service in the Cenacle!

Allow joy into your heart, and it will blossom into fine sentiments. Naturally grateful, the heart goes from one thing to the other without temptation and pain. The heart goes where there is pleasure. Following the heart, the will makes acts of offering. You may gather up an offering of good affections. Remain in that state as long as you can, as you come to the Office and the exercises that start the day. In this state of happiness, you will be self-possessed. Not only will this be the best disposition, but like a happy person you will give your day an impulse of joy and contentment. That's the disposition you should bring to all your actions: joy and well-being in the service of God.

[...]

Educated people often complain about distractions during meditation. Humans are more proud than affectionate, given to thinking rather than giving. This is why many devout persons tend to daydream, give play to their imagination, imagine victorious achievements. Avoid that, especially since yours is a life of love. Start with the heart and keep it full of joy. Remain in that general disposition in order to be like the child of the family who hears its father and mother saying: If you are very good, I will reward you. The child will be good, especially if what he likes is no secret.

Our Lord does not say, I will give you, **but begins by giving himself to us in Communion.** In a loving audience three hours a day, he is totally at our disposition. He tells us that he will give us all his best gifts. The soul should be prepared to give itself: Give me your heart [cf. Pr 23:26]. Evidently, the heart goes where it finds pleasure, where God is attracting it. Go in. Let me add, all the rest will be easy; once your heart is recollected, the rest will be recollected. What the heart loves, it wants.

Begin your day in that way, and proceed very easily to your other duties. All will go very well, and with great love, as long as you are in that disposition; you will be happy. Nothing will be difficult; in popular language, you'll zoom along. If you don't start like this, the sky will be foggy, you will start your adorations with imaginations, you will become restless because you let the fool [the imagination] take control of your house.

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If the first move is good, the whole day will be good. As the day begins, so goes the entire day. We become angry with God. What are you digging up in your memories? Leave them outside; they will only annoy you. As I told you, our Lord is behind the veil, under the sacred species, in the sacred Host, to use catholic language. Leave the memory, the imagination, and all that beyond the Jordan. Climb the mount of revelation, Mount Sinai, alone with our Lord. Your heart will speak well, because it will express clearly its strong feelings. Let yourself go, as you have already done on occasion.

How many times you have felt at ease at the feet of the Good Lord; it was not by way of the mind, since the mind is terribly fickle. Rather, you placed your heart at the feet of our Lord, and there you found your center. God reveals himself only in this way, and He cannot lie. *You would love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength* [cf. Mk 12:30]. Surely you could do this while making your bed, dressing up, and washing. These trifles are good enough to keep the mind busy. But your heart should be totally for the Good Lord. When a royal fiancée is preparing herself for the day, her heart is not focused on grooming, but on giving pleasure. The heart has good thoughts.

Let us go farther; while it may seem to be nothing, this is perhaps of the utmost importance. Bring that disposition of joy and happiness to your Communion, to all your exercises. Find happiness in serving the Good Lord, and bring that disposition to everything you do. Farther still, if that joy and happiness continue, don't look for other sentiments. These are the best of all. Don't look for others; your joy honors the Good Lord.

A master is pleased when his servants say they are happy, even when they have carried out heavy duties. If we are happy in our chores, the master will be pleased because we honor his goodness, serving him, showing him our love. We are happy because our heart is giving all its best. Even if we do only that, the Good Lord would be satisfied. When the heart is full of holy joy, do not sadden it by taking that joy away; that state of joy will not easily return. A child with candy will not want something bitter.

Do all you can to be in a state of joy. **The Eucharist is like a wedding; and a wedding is joyful and happy.** A man has only one wedding day; but for the servants and adorers, it is a daily feast. In this state, you have to experience the joy and happiness of a wedding.

Our Lord calls the Eucharist a feast. What is a feast? It means joy and happiness and expansion of heart. You should always maintain that disposition. While reparation is needed, you should not remain there. Come back to joy. The only true disposition I know is what is proper to your vocation. Notice that most of the time the devil wants to take this joy away, to throw us into temptation and discouragement, to leave everything. The service of our Lord is really not so difficult; but one who lacks childlike joy will center on self-love. It is no good to weep constantly or live under stress. Beware of this temptation to sadness, because it is the death of love.

I assure you that I will give a negative vote for any candidate to our Eucharistic vocation who is constantly sad. A passing sadness, due to a particular cross, may be acceptable. What I mean is that one who gives in to sadness either does not understand our vocation or is unwilling to give herself totally to it. It is impossible to weep constantly, to live constantly on Calvary.

Go to adoration in a spirit of joy. If this joy persists, make use of it, for one hour, three hours, as long as possible, for it binds you to our Lord. Pay no attention to contrary feelings. Renew this joy when it seems to lessen, as you would blow on embers to renew their flame. By renewing this joy you will avoid troubles and temptations. When awakened at night after only one hour of sleep, provided you fell asleep looking forward with joy to the hour of adoration, you will rise with joy. Sloth and imagination will not have time to intervene when one is already on the way. If as you approach you look forward with joy to an hour in paradise, be sure that the hour will soon pass in this heavenly atmosphere.

You may wonder whether it will always be this easy. Yes, if joy enters at the start. If, however, in a lazy way you groan that you slept but one hour, then even a quarter-hour will seem long. How foolish we can be! During daytime one must be ready to abandon everything, even one letter, to go to the Good Lord. If we say: I am leaving this aside to go to the Lord, it will go well. While in God's presence, must I worry about what is said at the door? They say that it is never allowed to disturb someone who is enjoying a good meal. That is said in the world. In our community one who is at adoration must never be disturbed. No one has a right to disturb an adorer.

I urge you to enter into this joy. Is there really any other of God's servants who can rejoice as much as you? Is it really possible to find devout persons or other communities with as much reason for expansive joy, or with as much freedom in the presence of the Lord? Since this is your special joy, learn to appreciate it. Everything here is arranged to make you happy in your adorations. You have no need to worry about financial or other material concerns. It would be wrong for you to be concerned about minor chores during adoration. During your hour, feel free to concentrate totally on adoration.

Begin tomorrow to make this experience. Fill your life with joy and happiness. Go joyfully to Divine Office, to Mass, and to the rest of the day. With this experience, you will exclaim: Is this possible? I am ever so happy and at peace! So much the better!



Points for reflection:

How can you permeate your day with supernatural joy?

- a) Take the resolution to watch over your first thoughts of the day in the morning. Do this for a week in order to know yourself better.
- b) What idea of the Eucharist do you find here?
- c) What is the link between happiness, our will, and our prayer?
- d) How can you practice the recommendation at the end of this instruction?