

## New Year's Wishes. To Rejoice in Our Lord<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,  
Nemours, Wednesday, January 3, 1866

*Melior est dies uno in atris tuis, super millia — I had rather one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere* (cf. Ps 83:11).

Today, my dear Daughters, everyone expresses good wishes. It's a social obligation, a practice of politeness to wish each other a happy new year. Let us follow the same practice, not merely as a custom, but as a family obligation, a law of love in our Lord. We come to wish you a happy new year. We already did so before the Blessed Sacrament, during Holy Mass, where the entire family is reunited on the same paten, where priests, brothers, and sisters all form a small Eucharistic crown. In spite of my unworthiness, since I represent the whole family, I presented you to our Lord.

**Now these are my wishes.** What wishes can I express to Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, to adorers? I can't wish anything for you, since you already have our Lord, who is all grace and all merit. You have the whole of our Lord. Before the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar what can I wish for you? Ah! My wish is that you serve him well, keep him always. With him, what could you be afraid of? As our Lord told his apostles when they were frightened by a storm and they woke him crying out: *Lord, save us! We are lost!* – *How little faith you have!* said the Savior, *What are you afraid of?* (cf. Mt 8:25-26) My Sisters, united to our Lord, you no longer have anything to fear, not even the devil. You are under the protection of the master, you belong to his family, his little court. He will watch over you, as he himself says in the holy gospel, *as a mother bird gathers her young under her wings* (cf. Mt 23:37).

**You no longer have anything to fear from the world.** The world belongs to the devil (cf. Jn 12:31). If our Lord is in command of the head, he will also be in command of the members. Our Lord is here to prevent evil. If our Lord should want a storm around you, what do you care, since he is with you. Even if you cannot defend yourselves, you will not need to, and you will need no other protectors; that would be an insult to the master. **What must you do? Remain close to the master.** It's up to the father to defend his family. You live in his house, not your own; he will protect and defend you, be at peace. However, serve him well, so that he will be able to say: I have a good family, I have good servants. May he find his delight with you. Then, he will remain with you.

**What else are you afraid of? Poverty?** Don't you always have bread, and the health-giving water that will never go dry...? You might object, but that's for the soul. If our Lord nourishes your soul, he will also sustain your body; he will be for you life-giving bread and water. He will nourish you; he will give food for soul and body. My Sisters, the poorer you are, the more is our Lord obliged to care for you. But you must serve him well; he must be satisfied with you. **Won't you have some sufferings and temptations?** You must have some, my Sisters, and you will have them. Just recall that our Lord is your life. Everything that comes from the hand of God is beautiful and good. You have all you need, in abundance.

My good Daughters, since you are Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, you must be duly qualified. In her master's house, a servant owns nothing; she takes care of what belongs to him. You should own nothing except the sacred Host that you receive. What else? A place at the prie-dieu to adore. This is your right.

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<sup>1</sup> Number 573. *Souhais de bonne année. Jouir de notre Seigneur.*

**My poor Daughters, the master deserves a joyful service.** This joy is well worth a tiny sacrifice from your human nature or the gentle and lovable gift of slumber. The psalmist says: *Serve the Lord with gladness, for the master you serve is good* (cf. Ps 99:2,5). Love enables one to accomplish everything with joy. The saints often complained, My God, we have done nothing, even when they had accomplished great deeds. It is, however, reasonable to want to act at the level of one's love and as God deserves. This is why a saint will exclaim, I have done nothing. My good Daughters, serve our Lord joyfully, because he is good and kind. Serve him in poverty, just as he himself served the Father by a poverty which he accepted as a crown. When obedient, recall his words, *I do the will of my Father who is in heaven* (cf. Jn 8:29). Your service will be in poverty, chastity, and obedience, the essential elements of the religious life. Any act of poverty or obedience is nothing other than your duty.

My good Sisters, while all that we've said is fine and in fact it is your duty, so what then are my wishes for you? Only this: be good and humble servants, [...] Be little in your own eyes. Humility must be your trait; I would not want any of you to be merely called "a humble sister". One who is not humble would not be a good servant. Such a name would be insulting.

**Since you are servants, what is your specific quality and grace?** It is simplicity, the simplicity of a child. A child is simple in telling the truth, in or against its favor. It is simple in its purpose, going directly to God and to its duty. Instead of telling you to be humble, I will say: Become simple servants. Simplicity is unity of life and purpose. Be simple, therefore, since simplicity is life, charity, and love of God. If you love it, you will possess it. If you are simple, you will be not a crystal since that's too beautiful for you, but you will become like a small transparent glass placed at his feet. You will be simple in your adorations, and then our Lord will infiltrate you with his virtue. Likewise, when our Lord wants to communicate himself to you, if you are simple, his heart will shine his rays directly on your heart. As you know, one ray calls for another.

What else? **I beg you to be joyful and happy; do not desire anything else.** What more can our Lord give you than himself? The Church itself could not give you more than its king. She gives you everything it has, a tabernacle and a throne. You have more than anyone, our Lord includes all the angels and saints; you have the King of the angels and saints. Rejoice over the good that you have; do not be satisfied with being good religious, good servants. All that is the primary condition of your state. Above all, rejoice in your vocation. This is the goal of your specific grace.

**And what does it mean to rejoice in our Lord?** My good Sisters, the Mosaic Law says, the one who sowed had the right to harvest the fruit. That is why I say: Rejoice in our Lord, rejoice in his goodness, rejoice in his love, rejoice in his friendship, and rejoice in his mercy because you need it. Rejoice in his heart, rejoice in him because you possess him, because you have him. He is not here for Nemours; he is here for you alone. He is around you like a sealed fountain, like an enclosed garden (cf. Sgs 4:12); rejoice over him as in heaven.

Our Lord is beautiful enough right here. You can see him, *My beloved is beautiful, radiant and ruddy* (cf. Sgs 5:10), as the Song of Songs expresses it. In the sacred species, his beauty is a beauty of love, of grace, and of merit. Contemplate him, then, and rejoice. Contemplate, bless, and praise our Lord in his beauty, and in his love. Rejoice in our Lord, as the angels in paradise rejoice over him. It is said that we will see him there, that we will love him there, that *we shall see him as he is* (1 Jn 3:2). St. John tells us that we will be submerged in an ocean of happiness. Love our Lord, possess him now, for in heaven your love will be perfected and glorified. Your love in this world is the seed of glory (cf. 1 Cor 15:42-44).

**What is love?** Love is the gift of self. Give yourselves, then, my poor Daughters; make an exchange of love with our Lord. Heaven will last forever! The fire that is started here will never go out. Hold on to

the Lord, guard him well so that he will remain with you, and find his delight and contentment with you. Our Lord must say, It's good to be here with these sisters who love me, who belong to me, with these hearts who want me alone, who are disposed to see and hear nothing in order to find their joy in me, and to remain with me! Wherever the spouse is, there must the servants be. I don't give you the name of spouses; it is too beautiful, reserved for heaven.

Again, my good Daughters, let me end thus: **Rejoice in the Lord.** It is not enough to live for the Lord, to make sacrifices and small penances for him. This is of little value, so little you can do for his sake. This is not the center of your vocation and your life. It is most important for you to rejoice in the Lord. Pleasing him, responding to his wishes must be the source of your happiness and peace. Rejoice that the Lord himself is in your possession. If this self-giving of the Lord depended on your own degree of perfection, I'd feel sorry for you. However, this is not the case. You possess the Lord, not because of anything you do, but because he gives himself mercifully. We cannot merit such a gift, yet the more unworthy we are the more he condescends to come to us!

Take joy, then, in your Eucharistic vocation, a permanent gift that is constantly multiplied for your sake. Let us, then, often repeat, *We are only servants, useless servants* (cf. Lk 17:10). That is how we develop triumphant joy in possessing God, the fulfillment of all our desires! What more can any of you wish for than to love the Lord and each day give him more of yourself? Long for his love; yearn to please and contemplate him. My wish for you then is that you will love our Lord wholly, sovereignly, and universally. Let yourselves be like tiny bits of glass in which God will radiate as in a tiny sun. Rejoice that he looks upon you. How blessed we are! When I reflect on it, we are bound to our Lord, riveted to his tabernacle, and chained to the sacred Host, to the monstrance...!

Do not forget that your heart is at the motherhouse. Pray here, but don't forget the motherhouse, where the postulants and novices are. Never forget the mother who came to found you and bless this community. **Strength comes from union.** You will not have her very long; she must return home<sup>2</sup>. The devil ties up good Eucharistic vocations, preventing them from coming. In the world, esteem is given only to vocations given over to good works. Ask for good vocations according to the heart of our Lord. Pray also for your superiors, who have all the responsibilities. They need strength and good health. You don't know what it's like to be a superior. You can sleep quietly, without worrying about the daily food, the material things needed for the Good Master. They want you to be peaceful and happy, while they take on all the burdens; but you must not forget them in your prayers.

One thing is missing in your rule as in ours; we forgot the superiors because they sought no attention. Although they have the *Our Fathers* in the rosary and at Benediction, they still lack support. We should make an adoration for the superiors of the Society, the first of the day would be proper. You receive our Lord, you receive food, and the superiors eat the crumbs. And if we have been too tactful up to now, we will begin to practice justice. This was due to our weakness, of course. I begin by telling you this, even though your heart is already telling you. But, I will look into this and correct it.

Continue to be happy and make yourselves worthy to be always happy, by serving our Lord with joy. Remember these words: ***Happy are they who dwell in your house, Lord! Continually they praise you in your eternal tabernacle*** (cf. Ps 83:5). Who are these happy ones? You are the ones. You adore him; you dwell in the house of the Lord; you are committed to adore his divine person. Just add the wood of sacrifice to the fire of love; always give your heart, your mind, and your desires. Then, you will be completely happy, and my wish will be fulfilled.

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<sup>2</sup> cf. *Journal III*, p. 38-44.

**Points for reflection:**

What are the New Year's wishes of Father Eymard for the Servants? Re-read the biblical texts found in this conference. Find the references to the Eucharist. Indicate the thought that touched you the most.