

Obedience To the Law, To the Rule, With Faith, Love and Humility¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Paris, Saturday, September 20, 1862

[...]

Our Lord said: *I accomplished the will of my Father* (cf. Jn 17:4), *and not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will be left unaccomplished by me* (cf. Mt 5:18). And our Lord fulfilled all these words, and that consisted obedience: the service of his Father through the law. He obeyed all those who would take the place of his Father, authority is the guardian of the law. How did he do this? You already know, he served his Father by a complete and punctual obedience. With this understanding not even one letter of the law could be omitted without violating the entire law. All divine commands are imperative, our Lord fulfilled the law with love, love for his Father and for our salvation.

[...]

Your personal law is very simple: you have [...] a rule, just like us, which is the order of the day. God deserves to be served by a punctual obedience, as our Lord did. This is the holiest law. Your response is simply to obey. You don't have to ask why or what to do. When you obey a superior, you are accomplishing the law of the Good Lord.

In order for you to grow, notice that as long as you are fervent the Good Lord gives you the faculties of youth. Then you will achieve adulthood so that you can nourish yourselves. But oftentimes the Holy Spirit keeps silent so that you can be guided by the law of common life! You would lose time, not know what to do, but in this way, you can still grow by leaps and bounds. The rule is a great advantage as we go towards God. The way is already laid out for you. All you need to do is go along, accomplishing with love whatever is asked of you. By your obedience, you fulfill the law and give honor to the Good Lord. Sooner or later, the Good Lord will reward you for your sacrifices.

When age weakens these faculties, there will still be obedience. That's why a Servant of the Most Blessed Sacrament cannot grow old; she will always be young, as long as she can still move. She will continue in her old age doing what she did when she was young. This assurance centers her whole life. Our routine keeps repeating itself and in spite of some lukewarmness, we cannot lose our way with the rule of the community. My Sisters, the rule is the way to heaven.

Now, my Sisters, how must we fulfill the rule, and obey perfectly? Let me ask for your close attention.

Above all, it is important to obey with faith, for obedience is mysterious. What does this mean? From the principle of obedience it follows that any superior to whom God has given authority over you stands in the place of God: *Whoever listens to you listens to me* (cf. Lk 10:16). Whenever you perform any deed out of obedience, you are fulfilling God's will. Direct your obedience to God himself, who is listening. Since you cannot see him, you act out of faith in the authority that he has given; and this makes your obedience meritorious. Your obedience is not merely to the person who commands, who is nothing more than an instrument, but to the very authority this person wields. Obedience must be out of faith.

¹ Number 451. *Obéissance à la loi, à la règle, avec foi, amour, humilité.*

Otherwise, as I said this morning, what will you accomplish if you stumble in shadows? You need a rule and superiors to guide you in fulfilling God's commands.

Do you realize that faith is above all else? What did Abraham do when God commanded him to sacrifice Isaac? He submitted with an obedience of faith, an act of faith; that's why God was so pleased (cf. Gn 22:1-12). When God spoke, he did not ask "why", "if", or "how". God is obeyed simply because he is the one commanding; like a child who obeys his mother. Obedience calls for spontaneity of faith. When the Good Lord expresses a wish, that's enough for me, because I clearly want to obey.

As a result of the obedience of faith, the mind is quiet. It doesn't need to know whether what is being commanded is good, or to see whether what is being commanded is according to the rule or your vocation. Everything is for the service of our Lord. Of course, if something is commanded outside the rule or your vocation, you are not obliged to follow. Authority does not go that far. However, in actions already known and accepted, seek the merit of fulfilling the will of God. Do angels reason out the will of God? In certain cases, it is true that obedience allows us, not to reason out, but to make known certain personal matters. If these were known, the superior would make some modifications. However, in ordinary community life, there is no need to make comments, since everything is done in common obedience. Act with simplicity, and there will be more abundant merit. Why is a child so happy when it obeys? Because it obeys with simplicity. Childlike simplicity deepens the child's joy.

What must motivate obedience? The motive of love. Obey out of love for God. Obey because God is pleased when we fulfill his holy will. This is the perfect motive; you cannot find a greater one, because obedience is the holocaust of the entire person. Obedience sacrifices the entire person. Obedience of the will, of the body, and of the whole being is the perfect sacrifice of all the virtues. Compared to it, the others don't count. Therefore, love the Lord well in order to obey.

Do not stop there. After obeying, love your submission with humility. [...] **Do you see the process? Faith begins, love works, and humility preserves.** Ah! My good Daughters, fulfill the will of God in humility. After finishing your duties, you must take care not to draw praise on yourself – to want two masters, two rewards. After obeying properly, let us not say, I was very good. That's what children do who go looking for their mother to boast of their little sacrifices. They don't know how to obey God for himself alone. I was very good, they claim. Let's not act like children and seek approval from the superior. Just say, I merely want to obey.

[...]

We are only unprofitable servants (cf. Lk 17:10). Really, my Sisters, when a hired hand receives his salary, is he also thanked for all his services, for all that he did during the year? Will he get another reward? Is a soldier thanked for serving well for seven years? He has merely done his duty; he has received his pay. Thank him? He will simply be dismissed. Here, your service is one of love, the service of the master. Hold on to your little merits; you need them. Consider our Lord as man: did he not keep his merits?

This is the way to act; learn to obey with faith, with love, and with humility. This is your mission. Since yours is a life of adoration, it is like a golden chain beginning in the morning by Holy Communion and Divine Office, and tied up again in the evening. Do not break it. How would you manage to fasten it again? Obey with great purity. The way to fulfill the will of God and please him is to act out of a very pure motive. That's the way to please God, and to please me also.

Points for reflection:

For Eymard, obedience is a golden chain that binds us to God by means of the exercises of the Rule. Does this change your idea of obedience?

How do faith, love, and humility transform our obedience? How do you consider obedience in your gospel journey?