

Second Anniversary of Foundation¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Paris, Wednesday, July 31, 1861

Well, my dear Sisters, two years ago today you pronounced your first vows. Already two years – time flies!

When a grace is first given, at the beginning of a society, things are very simple. As it grows, it takes on importance and the grace becomes more demanding, because it seems that, without decreasing, it becomes a grace of virtue rather than a grace of gift and mercy. Humans want to intervene. The first grace is like a ray of the sun. Human effort is nothing compared to God's gift. You received that first grace without being aware of its height, its width and its length; only God knows. We can only say that the order of Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament started like all the works of God, very simply. Simplicity is the sign of God's work; complications come from human beings.

God's deeds are simple; we see only his hand and his gift. Human instruments vanish, I would even say that they are mere signs and proofs of God's goodness and mercy.

[...]

Like all great works, the Society of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament started with trials. You have not been without hardships. There have already been many crosses. At first, they cause a few wounds and bleeding, and they form a crown of thorns. Later it becomes obvious that God has been glorified through them. Let us not exaggerate our trials, for they are in proportion to our weakness. It seemed that when some left, everything would fall apart. However, one stone was replaced by another. Human endeavors are like stones placed one over the other. If you take one out, everything collapses, because one holds up the other.

Keep in mind that the works of God are like rivers composed of round drops, rolling and forming an ocean, rolling into God's graces. Those that choose to go to the shore as foam end up by evaporating. People who are faithful to grace flow as in a river whose source is in heaven; they flow together. There is nothing particularly noble about us; we just go on our way. The works of God are like the river of life or the tree of life; fruits draw life from the sap. If a flower falls, it dies; but the flower that remains next to it gains double strength. It is surely true that the misfortune of some brings about the good fortune of others.

People suffering² on Calvary are not to be pitied, for trials are great blessings. Some people may at time wonder why God chooses to begin great works on Calvary. Since Christ's love is a crucified love, all his works must bear this trait and be of the same nature. That's not all. Some trials come from God to show his power. These are not our concern, since they are purely from God. Others are intended to purify our nature. We bring about these trials because there remains some impurity within us. We have not yet been tested as gold seven times purified in fire (cf. Ps 11:7). God tests us in his mercy. There is yet another trial, the trial of God's glory. Since God always uses created things to accomplish his work, he uses this trial as a means of crucifixion lest anyone assume the glory that belongs to God alone. Then everyone will know that the Good Lord is the one who is doing the work.

¹ Number 356. *Deuxième anniversaire de la fondation.*

² May be understood as: whom we pity (those we feel sorry for).

I come back to your vows. You gave yourselves to the service of love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and you gave yourselves completely. This is a holocaust, nothing is held back; all is consumed (cf. Lv 1), leaving only the ashes from the fire at the altar. You keep nothing. The heart that refuses this self-sacrifice is not pleasing to God. God wants all or nothing. You did not give yourselves only for a time. The first ones called have the advantage of being used as the foundation, cemented in place by the total and perpetual gift of themselves. This does not mean that you are better than the others, but that you had the first grace. This is a perpetual gift.

Now that we have given ourselves for all time, what remains to be done? Now it's important to continue to develop. While in theory the victim is dead to the world, to self-love and to its own will, this is not always true in practice. This tree must be cultivated so that it will bear fruits of life. The holocaust must continue to burn so as to purify the gold. After all, what you offered is nothing else but your natural life, a life born in the world. Since along the way we tend to return to worldliness, and the outer crust grows anew, this gift needs to be purified constantly. Once the chalice and the host are offered, we must keep them clean.

Your work began on the day of your vows. Since there is always a temptation to work for yourself, you must check to see whether you are stealing, taking back what you have given. This is a common temptation of human weakness. Besides, a person with vows becomes more delicate. Since our Lord clothed you with a white robe, you must walk through muddy areas with great care. Since God has endowed you with a crown and covenant of love, these must be kept ever pure and virginal. The devil will be furious, but prayer is powerful. You no longer pray as simple, ordinary Christians, but as Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, as his adorers and spouses. You have now become consecrated persons.

My Sisters, what is the purpose of your vows? This is written in your rule: for the better service of our Lord. That's true, but it leads to something else. The Eucharistic vow is the crown of the others; therefore it is **to become pure hosts, holy and pleasing to God** (cf. Rm 12:1), **by being transformed into him.**

How will you do this? We priests perform this miracle at Mass, by a single word, a truly divine word. At the consecration, we change the order of things; we produce the living bread. It is not difficult for us, we merely say a few words, and stand there offering sacrifice. But you, what will you do? Your body represents the bread. You should be priest and victim. The priest is your soul; your body is the victim. How can that miracle be done? Every day you should do it by your love. I cannot do it for you. I can help you, but you must transform yourself. Your body must become the body of our Lord by means of his virtues; your soul must become his soul by means of his love; your whole being must become our Lord by means of his divine and human life in you. How will you do this? As religious, you have the grace and the power. This is your daily task. At the end of your life, you should have become, so to speak, a host soaring to heaven. Otherwise, you would not be Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

It's often said that a good religious is one who has the virtues of the founder, has become like the founder. A true Benedictine or Dominican religious is like his father; the perfection of a child is to be like his father. As for you, you have no human model before you, no saint, but you have Jesus Christ himself. You should not pass through any mediator to go to our Lord.

What are you? A crystal buried in the mud appears black. When our Lord washes it, it becomes beautiful, because he had created it. It had no light in itself, but exposed to the sun, it became gorgeous, reflecting the sun. More than that, it becomes like a magnifying glass which when focused ignites a fire, able to burn all that surrounds it. **You are this crystal!** You have life, feelings, and a soul. You need to expose this body to that fire, expose it before our Lord, and it will be fused into him, like wax that takes

the form of the mould into which it is poured. Your soul needs to melt in the sun, to become like another sun. This is what you must do every day during adoration: let your soul be transformed by love.

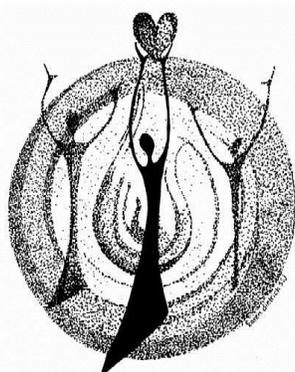
Every day has its work, its virtues to practice; you cannot remain static. A plant is never in the same state, in the same form. Beginning with the seed sowed in the ground, up to the blade of wheat, it keeps growing until maturity. If not, it would seem ill. Your life, if I dare say it, must continue to perfect Jesus Christ within you. You had a childhood and adulthood; you must continue growing. Life does not look back; it can only go forward. Your life must be like a seed growing constantly; your virtues must grow day by day. Your death must be like a ripened ear. It must be like a flame that manifests the power of love, after starting in the hearth and ready to burst out, like the Virgin Mary who died out of love. If a vase is filled with too many gaseous substances, it will burst open if the vase is fragile. Death is like that.

You, novices, must prepare yourselves for your vows: these are days of engagement for your wedding, when you will enter into the family of our Lord, when you will belong to him. You must prepare yourselves so that on that day you will be adorned with all the virtues. This will be easier for you than in the world, since, as adorers, you already possess our Lord, as king. However, the better your preparation, the more perfect you will be.

My Sisters, you who made your vows, the first word, and the first commitment, was like the flight of an eagle. You must follow our Lord everywhere faithfully. Since you received more, you must give more. Remember this: you are a drop of water in the river – flow along with the others; do not go to the shore, but to the ocean that is heaven.

Keep in mind that our Lord wants only to give himself to you in his kindness and his sweetness, to give you all that he has, on condition that you offer yourself to him. The measure of your gift will be the measure of his gift to you. Your heart will be filled to its capacity. Light doesn't mix with darkness. Since you are few in number, you must weigh in the scale of God, as if you were many. God does not count, he weighs. Bring before the Blessed Sacrament not only your simple love and your virtues, but all the graces, the virtues of the Society. Put on the merits of the Blessed Virgin. Otherwise you would only be poor beggars. Clothe yourselves with the robe of your mother, with the riches of your sisters. Take along the three gifts of the wise men: the gold of sacrifice, the incense of prayer, and the myrrh of mortification (cf. Mt 2:11).

Go forward, my poor Daughters, walk firmly; may the words of the prophet be fulfilled in you: *Enlarge the space of your tent* (cf. Is 54:2), so that God may send spouses to the four corners of the world, by enlarging your heart and your charity: because here are the tents of God.



Points for reflection:

According to this instruction, what still remains for us to do after perpetual vows? What picture of the “Eucharistic life”, of “adoration” does Father present? What is his picture of religious life? Take note of the reference to our baptismal priesthood.