

## **The Good Lord Unites Us to Himself by Gentleness. We Must Place Ourselves in the Will of God<sup>1</sup>**

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,  
Paris, Tuesday, May 27, 1862

**My Sisters, the Good Lord unites us to himself by gentleness;** it is through the gentleness of this union that he leads us to strength. I often spoke to you about sacrifices, virtues, and everything that you should do; but you should not center in these sacrifices, in that state of death that I spoke of. This is not your center. The Good Lord does not unite us to himself through sacrifice, but through the experience of his goodness. He makes us feel a great sweetness, a sign of the grace of God in us, because without this sweetness, we would collapse under the weight of sadness and discouragement.

**The Good Lord adjusts our trials to our strength.** When he sees that we are falling, he lifts us up and consoles us. When an important sacrifice is coming, the Good Lord prepares us by a great sweetness that does not last; we then give ourselves and bind ourselves to the Good Lord because we feel happy. The Good Lord does everything in us. The result is that later, these memories will uplift us as we say: When I made this promise, I was so happy! In time of sacrifice, the Good Lord upholds us through sweetness. **We must not shake off this experience of the goodness of the Good Lord;** that would be a serious presumption. When the Good Lord wants to give us his grace, his caresses, some visible signs of his love, we must not say: I don't need them. If you didn't need them, the Good Lord would not have sent them to you. As the *Imitation* says: Receive consolation, but don't get attached to it, because it is passing. Do not refuse it, however, out of foolish pride.

No one can remain in a state of death; a soul cannot remain crucified. And so, let us thank our Lord when we are in the state of peace, confessing our weaknesses and praising his goodness. **We are never lacking in consolations; in a state of pure trials,** we would collapse. Our Lord experienced that in the Garden of Olives; when he was abandoned by his Father, he suffered in the state of pure suffering, but we never go that far. Our Lord always gives consolations. Only those souls who do not love the Good Lord will experience despair; this never happens to us Christians. There are always consolations and sweetness that refresh us. At times like those, the soul needs only to let the storm pass in order to return to peace and calm. The Good Lord is there, and if his grace is not always perceptible, it's because we are not paying attention to it, but it is there.

**This peace of soul is the sign that we are on good terms with the Good Lord.** If we felt uneasy with the Good Lord, we would not be at peace. Neither the devil nor the world can give it to us (cf. Jn 14:27). This peace resides in the highest point of the spirit, as St. Francis de Sales used to say, in our most spiritual part. That is where we find this peace, this consolation from God. Then it comes down into the soul, into our faculties, into our senses. It is like a spreading sweetness, always there.

It seems to me, my good Sisters, that we should experience these consolations often. If we were purer, we would frequently receive the fatherly caresses of our Lord. He would tell us that he is happy. He does not say this if we are not pure enough, or inattentive. If he told us: I am happy, we would believe that we have already reached perfection, and we would do nothing more. Sometimes we praise children even if they have done badly. Our Lord cannot do this. He prefers to encourage us in his fatherly goodness, and we must be satisfied with that.

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<sup>1</sup> Number 417. *Le bon Dieu nous unit à lui par la douceur. Il faut se mettre dans la volonté de Dieu.*

My good Sisters, if the Good Lord could give us his heavenly happiness, he would do so. He cannot, because of our pride. We would believe that we are already in the third heaven, and he would lose us. He acts like a mother who does not give sweets to her child because she knows that he has worms. The Good Lord knows that we have too much self-love. So, he gives us the strength of virtue and the strength of sacrifice, which are worth much more for us.

**My Sisters, unite yourselves to the Good Lord because he is good**, because he is good to you, as the psalmist said: *O my soul, hope in God your savior, you shall again be thanking him* (cf. Ps 41:6). Say: **My soul, hope in God!** You need him. You may be in a period of trial; the Good Lord has had to remove something that you like. He had to prick you in some way so that you might not become slothful and lazy. Let him act, and be happy. Whether painful or not is unimportant; if the Good Lord is happy, that's all that matters. Go into detail. If you carried out the rule, you have done what the Good Lord asked of you, and fulfilled his particular will; be happy. Do not rejoice in yourself. I would not like to see that in you, because you would dry up the spring of consolations. Do not become your own end; remain happy in God. Suffering doesn't matter. Be happy if the rule is accomplished, charity has been safeguarded. That's enough for me, a great consolation. One who constantly checks his pulse will end up getting sick. Fear of illness can actually bring it on.

**Do you want to have peace?** Find your happiness in our Lord; in him, not in yourselves. You cannot possibly be happy over what you do; there's no comparison with what our Lord does for you. It may be very good; you showed good will. But you must not center in yourself but in God; in that way, you will always be happy, because you will be in a divine center, in the divine will. Persons who live in this way are always in a peaceful atmosphere, because they are in the will of God. God's will is always good, gracious, and holy.

**What is painful is the fear of having displeased the Good Lord**, by having committed some sin; this can be very painful. Since a Eucharistic soul should find happiness only in the good pleasure of God, putting her happiness only in him. What should she do if she feels that the Good Lord is not happy, that she has sinned, is feverish? Find what could have displeased him, throw yourself at his feet, and ask pardon, because his will is that you humble yourself at his feet. Place yourself there.

This is the point I wanted to make: we are like children, let us always seek the will of God. If you put your goal in the good that you have done, in yourself, you will never be happy. I hesitate to admit that my faults and negligences are more numerous than my good actions. My good actions are not enough to take away my pain: I acted badly; the Good Lord is not happy. Put yourself in the will to do penance; ask pardon from your sister if you offended her. The Good Lord wants you at his feet; put yourself in the will of the Good Lord who wants humility. If you want only beautiful things, there will be a constant struggle, because you yourselves are ailing; and so, my good Daughters, this is what you should do. This is most important in the spiritual life; perhaps you never heard this before. Take on this will to do penance and bear humiliation, and you will be at peace.

Whoever does not want to lose peace of soul, must prevent temptation from entering in. Times of trouble make us feverish. The devil comes to sow rebelliousness in our heart. Some may remain for hours or days in this state. Don't allow that. Be always at peace with the Good Lord. In times of struggle you may not feel this peace. **My God, you want to show me the door, but the angels will let me go in where I could not before; I will remain like the tax collector** (cf. Lk 18:13). In this way, you will shorten your time of trial. You will have earned more than with the purest acts; but this has been very painful.

When the Good Lord gives his fatherly grace, when he places us next to himself, what happiness! All your strength lies there; remain there.

The devil is powerful only when there is trouble; he acts only at such times. Why? Have you ever seen deeply into troubled water? No. When the soul is troubled, you see only the sand; the soul is troubled, the sea is no longer a mirror. Do not do that any more, my poor Daughters; put yourselves in the will of God. By accepting his holy will, you will find peace. As the Holy Gospel says: *Come to me when you are troubled and tired, and I will comfort you; take my yoke, it is easy and light* (cf. Mt 11:28-30). – There is a yoke, but come to me, remain with me. Ah! What happiness!

**Points for reflection:**

This teaching describes the link between suffering and consolation, and the attitude we should maintain in consolation. This reflects somewhat the experience of Father Eymard at St. Roman. What challenge do you find here for your spiritual journey?

- a) Re-read the Rule of Life # 23.
- b) Re-read the Beatitudes in its light.
- c) What are the main points in this instruction?

