

The Life of Love ¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Monday, November 5, 1860

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will have their fill* (Mt 5:6). This is not said in today's world, where these people are called unfortunate. If you are hungry, you must eat. If you are thirsty, you must drink. Our Lord Jesus Christ considered happiness to consist in satisfying hunger and thirst. In heaven, the saints always live of the Good Lord; they never exhaust him. Their hunger and thirst are always satisfied, and yet they always desire more. There is something similar to this on earth, but since we are exposed to so many temptations and weaknesses, we easily lose our way.

Well! My Sisters, let us meditate on this, on the life of love.

[...]

When I ask you, Are you satisfied? You tell me, No, I'm not satisfied with my meditations, I'm not recollected. We must give something from our abundance, to light and maintain a brighter fire. Be aware of this, nature is inclined to action, to penances, to the practice of virtues. But be careful, this will not bring you happiness. The life of love consists in eating Jesus Christ. This is my nourishment, my life, what does nourishment do? It sustains our natural faculties, develops our organs. If it isn't good, it doesn't support us very long. If it's bad, it makes us sick. If food is good, exercise will not tire us, because the food sustains us. It's the same with the spiritual life; you must be well nourished. Then you will be sufficiently strong to persevere in doing acts of penance. Virtues would simply be the exercise of zeal, the gift of your superabundance because you will be well fed.

The Good Lord, who knows our weaknesses, tells us in the holy bible: **Come, my friends –eat, drink the wine I have prepared for you, become intoxicated, my dear Ones** (cf. Pr 9:5). You see, God values the life of the soul, only friends are invited; strangers are not invited to one's table. *Come, friends*, eat my bread. What is this bread? The Eucharist is a meal: so then we are satisfied and happy. In eating Jesus, we have the truth, heaven and earth. He is everything. *Who eats me*, he says, *will have eternal life, this life which will never die* (cf. Jn 6:51). Drink, my friends, the blood of our Lord. We must be hungry and thirsty to eat and drink – hungry and thirsty for our Lord, for his truth, his virtues, his entire being, to be one with him, desire his reign. This is hunger for our Lord. Without this hunger, we cannot make progress. We can never be satisfied with bad food, with emptiness. Eat, become intoxicated. What does it mean to become intoxicated? It means to drink more than we should, to go to excess, to leave one's natural state. In the spiritual order, it is the passion of love. Those who don't arrive at the passion of love are still on the way, not yet happy. We must reach that state: *Deus cordis mei – You are the God of my heart* (Ps 72:26), says the prophet. To be the God of our heart, he must be our only king, our only treasure.

Notice how Jesus has really put life into the Eucharist. He says: Take. He does not give, he offers. It is up to us to accept this gift out of genuine desire. Drink. See how the fulfillment of the promise is in the same terms, May they all eat and drink, and not merely on rare occasions. The soul that's not properly nourished becomes weak. We eat the divine Eucharist once in the morning; we should eat it all day long by spiritual Communion, expressing our desire and gratitude for the gift. We should live from our Communion, since a soul that lives from Communion is happy. Why do we go about seeking consolations? Because we have not eaten Jesus Christ in spiritual Communion, we become beggars. Why are we sad? Because we seek something other than our Lord, other than his life-giving love. We

¹ Number 274. *Il ne faut pas vivre dans vos péchés, dans les vertus. Vie d'amour [We must not live in our sins, in our virtues. The Life of Love]*

become discouraged, as a child starts crying when it no longer sees its mother. We would like to keep our own supply, saying: this is fine, not bad at all! We are tempted to eat our own bread, not God's. Anyone who is not immersed into the Eucharistic life of love cannot be happy. Such a person is always dissatisfied. Having nothing, the soul asks help from the angels and saints; it goes begging.

My good Sisters, **take care to live in the love of Jesus Christ.** You must receive Jesus Christ, his truth, his holiness, all that he has. All that you need at this moment lies in him. If a flower does not open, you will not see what it is; if you don't open a fruit, you will never taste it. Jesus Christ is complete goodness, complete truth, and complete love. You should begin by the virtues you need at the moment. You must be in union with Jesus Christ: *Whoever eats me*, he says, *will live.* (cf. Jn 6:57). Life is a communion with him. Fill your heart with great yearnings for his love. If you seek him at Nazareth, or Calvary, he is no longer there; you would simply be a pilgrim [seeking] him.

Whenever I see sadness on your faces, I know you have strayed from the fold, looking elsewhere for mere crumbs. Keep in mind that no one weeps at a wedding feast. You should always be joyful. The Holy Spirit says that *the soul which loves shares in a continual feast* (cf. Pr 15:15). There is always the tendency to center on the "me", saying: I want to live. Work diligently to destroy this "me". With a little more awareness, you will easily see when you go astray. Jesus Christ is always the same, he has all the virtues; do not leave him. If you don't enter into him, who will give you what you need? Jesus Christ didn't put his body into the mouths of the apostles. It must be taken. *Come, my friends* (cf. Pr 9:55), it is said in the Book of Wisdom, and then: *Enter into the joy of your Lord* (cf. Mt 25:21,23)

What is this joy? It is the reign of God in you. Meditate well on this. For you, life is Jesus Christ; remain in him. Live from him. Don't remain in your sins, your virtues, the charity of your neighbor. These things are only exercises; they are not a goal.

You may ask, **When will I know that I live of our Lord?** When in need you go quickly to tell him. When in temptation, the fear of displeasing him will be your first reaction. His wish will be your first desire, not the second. Then he will live in you. But we go to him only after great battles; scouring the world and our self-love, but he's not there. He is present only by his grace, and he wants to enter in. If he's already in you, he's not there as if on a throne; you must come to that. You understand that the devil must not be very happy; he tempts you, it is his malicious right. You understand that our nature will not abdicate its right, it is full of self-love. Yet a will given to the Good Lord will say: nature may have what it needs and no more. I will not listen to the devil. Jesus Christ will live and reign in me, what is his will? **That I live of him. That is my whole answer and my whole thought.**

❖ Cf. "The Eucharistic Passion, Lent", February 19, 1861: Booklet 1 B Feasts and Seasons



Point for reflection:

By Holy Communion, our spiritual hunger is transformed into joy. The reign of God lives in us and we are introduced to the way that leads to union with God. How can we promote the development of this grace?