

The Purpose of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Tuesday, July 26, 1859

The purpose of man is to know, love, and serve God in this world and to possess him in the next – that is the catechism. The purpose of the Christian changes one word: to know, love and serve Jesus Christ, God and man, in this world, and to share his glory in heaven. **As for you, my Sisters, your purpose is the know, love, and serve Jesus Christ in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar in this world, and reign with him in heaven.** That is your entire law; that is your purpose.

What difference is there between your personal purpose and that of others? A big difference. The Holy Eucharist belongs to everyone; it is the grace for all. But the difference lies in that for Christians in general it is the means for the love of God and for our salvation: they receive Communion in order to receive strength against temptations, to ask for grace. In general that is very good: to ask for grace and strength, since the Eucharist fortifies us for the battle and the exercise of virtues. As for you, you have more than this purpose.

Christians occasionally come to adore our Lord; so also do the religious. However, they don't place their center in the Holy Eucharist. For them, the Holy Eucharist is a means to live well. The priest, the apostle and the religious receive Communion in order to succeed in converting others. It is their power and means. Religious souls receive Communion in order to know their vocation and to acquire the perfection of their rule. Adoration is the means in their Rule for accomplishing their duties perfectly. A Carmelite or Poor Clare have no further thought about it since the Eucharist is not their purpose. Another says: I go to Communion in order to take good care of my sick patients, to better instruct my students. They don't say: I will take good care of our sick and raise our children properly in view of the Holy Eucharist – for them, it is a means to attain their purpose.

Your ultimate purpose is to unite yourself to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. All your actions must culminate in this royal act. You would not be here if you were not for the most Blessed Sacrament²; you would not have this name; you would not have gathered for a common goal. Some enter religious life for their salvation and perfection. Here, our objective is not our own perfection; we merely desire the Blessed Sacrament. Your purpose is to unite yourself to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament³. All your thoughts are for the Eucharist – they must be directed there – flow from there, and return there. All means are directed towards their goal. Your goal is the Eucharist; you cannot always think about it, but you must refer everything to it. Anything that cannot be related to it should not be your concern; it is not your business. Consequently, all your words, your actions, and your desires must converge to this end. A businessman knows his merchandise and relates everything to his profit: his efforts, his courtesy with his

¹ Number 144. *De la fin des Servantes du Très Saint Sacrement.*

² Missing in Guillot and (S7bis): *il faut que toutes vos actions aboutissent à cette action royale, vous ne seriez pas ici si vous n'étiez pas pour le très saint Sacrement.* (All your actions must culminate in this royal act. You would not be here if you were not for the most Blessed Sacrament)

³ Missing in Guillot and (S7bis): *votre fin est de vous unir à Jésus au saint Sacrement* (Your purpose is to unite yourself to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament).

customers, and so on – everything he does is for the success of his business. In the same way, we must refer all our actions to the service of our Lord.

Why do you get out of bed? It is to fulfill your heart's desire to go to church; if you don't get up, you cannot go. **Why do you pray** your first meditation before coming? It is your proper attire, in order to come in suitably. A mother gathers all her children in order to present herself before the master or the king. Why do you eat? To sustain yourself, in order to adore our Lord. **Why do you take recreation or rest?** To relax your mind, since you cannot always be adoring our Lord who gives you real rest at his feet, before the Blessed Sacrament.

All must be done out of purity of intention. It is in this purity that merit lies. All actions gain merit when done in the state of grace, and **by directing all your actions to the Blessed Sacrament**, you have a second reward: your merit doubles. We gain one hundred times over when our relationship to the Blessed Sacrament is intimate and direct. The more you make this link, the more perfect you will be. All of you do the same thing externally, but internally there is a difference. Perfection is greater where there are more thoughts, affections, and purity of intention.

All must be directed to the Holy Eucharist. It must be your life – the life of your soul. The state of grace is the life of the soul, just as the life of the body lies in the soul to which it is united. The Holy Eucharist must be what gives movement and life to your actions; it must be your happiness. The Holy Eucharist must be the inspiration and sanctifier of our life; it must be our end. In the world, people speak of sending their good works to heaven – in this way, to prepare their crown. For you, it must be through the Blessed Sacrament that you make your crown. You don't have to go so far, since the Blessed Sacrament should be the center of your life. My Sisters, notice well what I mean: the Holy Eucharist is your only and universal end, it must guide and dominate everything. You must place yourselves at your center, in your goal, because **for you, the Eucharist is both means and goal**: your life and your virtues take life in Jesus Christ Eucharistic. He is their model, their rule, and their perfection in order to become perfect works in the eyes of God.

In order to have Eucharistic perfection, we must be conscious of the Eucharist. It must be the soul of your soul. In order to reach this awareness of the Eucharistic presence, of a presence of love, it must be, so to speak, natural and easy. [...] No one can place a cloud between the rays of the Eucharistic sun and you, if you don't want it. You can always be in your end, and everywhere enjoy the happiness of the saints in paradise. They have the joy of love, while you have the joy of sacrifice. They have a state of life, while you have a center – it is Jesus Christ who has rewarded them and who will reward you. No one can take him away from you: his abode is permanent. No one can remove him from his tabernacle and from your heart, because no one can prevent you from referring all your actions to him, from finding your inspiration in him. The devil cannot do it, and you will certainly not do it. You can attain great virtue in very little time.

No one will ever remove the Blessed Sacrament from this world: whether king, or Pope, or anyone. He will remain there until the final day. He will remain in this world independent of every human power. He is always my good and my possession; I can continually do what I was called to do: this gives great joy to my soul. That is what makes your vocation so sublime and fortunate.

In comparison with other orders, there has never been an order that had adoration as its purpose. The purpose of missionary religious orders is to preach – they cannot preach all the time –, to hear confessions and to teach. They have moments of relief, since they are not always involved in the purpose of their vocation and their apostolate; they don't always have the means – they don't abide in their purpose. True, they can do this through prayer – that's very good. But they cannot make it their sole aim, since people are not always available. For example, they cannot always be teaching the pagans. They can pray, but

they cannot make it the object of their goal. It is easy to get lost in these exercises by no longer having a divine purpose.

As for you, you can always exercise your apostolate, always preach, hear confessions, and convert souls by praying that God send them persons who have the ability and the mission. The Benedictines, the Trappists and the strict orders have their purpose in penance. However, they cannot always be suffering; they cannot make suffering a center. They need to relax; the body needs rest – it cannot always be a victim. It is the same with teaching: you cannot make teaching a center of life. The misfortune of these vocations is that they get lost, by taking their means for their end, by making them their center. If a religious⁴ is too attached to his pupils, to his mission, he is in danger of getting lost. We can get lost in fasting, as the Pope commented about Eutyches who did much fasting: It is better to be humble. In adoration, we can never dare to be proud before our Lord – we always leave adoration feeling very small, very grateful.

By itself, your purpose is sanctifying – it always tends towards perfection. **Understand the difference there is between your purpose and that of other orders:** they have two tasks, while you have only one. They have one purpose of means, and one of relation to God. For you, your means and your purpose are only one: you have the light of grace and of the perfection of love: *Whoever eats me will live for me*, (Jn 6:57) says Jesus Christ. Therefore, as soon as I feed on Jesus Christ, I am perfect; I must live, no longer for myself, but for him who feeds me. As soon as I feed on Jesus Christ, I have his spirit and his strength; he gives me the grace to act accordingly. The Good Lord is really good!

[...]

Here is the point I want to make: the danger of human attractions no longer exists. Jesus Christ is the great light – everything else disappears. People are like shadows, imperfections, clouds. [...] It will happen that a Eucharistic soul will detach herself without hesitation and without effort. As St. Paul says: *Jesus Christ is the first born of all creatures* (Col 1:15); he is the model and pattern. Do we pay attention to a servant when we have the master, or to a star when we have the sun? The soul perceives itself only in another superior nature; she needs words other than human words. Virtues have spots in the light of the sun; all created things appear so small that they no longer deserve our attention. For our confessor, we can have respect, trust and obedience; we thank him as we thank a doorkeeper who introduces us to the house. Even the Blessed Virgin herself is seen only as the mother of the king. We remain independent and free.

What makes us unhappy? [...] We tend to attach ourselves to a superior, to our sisters, to our work, and to everything. It is our poor human nature; like glue that tends to stick to everything. How could I attach myself to things when I spend three hours before the Blessed Sacrament – who will reproach me? I would be sick; I would have a fever.

We become attached to books. Jesus crucified must be a book for me. Jesus Eucharistic is more than all that: books, sermons, spiritual treatises – I no longer need anything. There are great preachers in Paris – would you not go to hear them? What will they tell me? They could only speak to me about Jesus Christ. And they will say very little and very badly, because their audience is not religious enough. I prefer listening to Jesus Christ: he is my truth, my light and my doctor. I prefer the master to the servant. I prefer drawing from the spring rather than begging for a few drops. There is no need for books in

⁴ In Guillot.: *si un religieux (if a religious)*. The *if* was added later; this would explain why here (*S7bis*), the one who copied Guillot does not have it.

adoration, unless we are, so to speak, someone who is dying. Sometimes, you may take one; you should. You could take the *Imitation*. I will teach you how to read, how to find Jesus Eucharistic in books.⁵ The thought does not even enter my mind to read during adoration: I prefer being stupid, imbecile, and half dead rather than pray the prayer of someone else. The Eucharist is my companion. [...]

You must understand why your vocation is so beautiful, so good; we are not concerned with the exterior. [...] We no longer find our meaning in a color, in a house, in a means, but in the Eucharist. That is my purpose and I want no other. [...] We pity those who take pity on you: they offer you money and gold – pay no attention to them; that is not our purpose. We must reach that point in order to be happy.

When we had little trials, some people came to console me⁶. To be polite I said nothing: poor people! Our Lord sees: that is what we need – these trials are purifying us. More or less money: are we concerned about that? This would be a big mistake: we would have two ends. [...] We dwell in our center, in what we love. In passing, someone may give you a souvenir, some gifts. But do you want to become slaves? God does not enslave us. Why can we not do for God what we do for another person? We should do it; that is our happiness.



⁵ Note in Ravanat: We will prefer using the works of our Venerable Father.

⁶ From Ravanat, Guillot, (*S7bis*) and A: venaient pour *me* consoler (came to console *me*), rather than in Pineau: venaient *nous* (came to console *us*).