

## Three Obstacles that Prevent Us from Enjoying<sup>1</sup> Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament<sup>2</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Paris, Friday, June 14, 1861

My Sisters, I think you clearly understood what I was saying yesterday in my instruction<sup>3</sup>. These things come naturally to you. Some people did not understand me, because they would need the habit of piety, the habit of prayer; in other words, they need to know how to think and pray. But, since this is your state, I think that you all understood. However, I will explain a little more.

**I said that many people don't enjoy our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament, for three reasons.**

**First**, because they approach our Lord with their senses, limiting themselves to using only their senses. Since our senses cannot grasp the most Blessed Sacrament, since our Lord does not allow himself to be seen and touched, the result is that these people experience nothing. They think, and speak, and act only through their senses – they have a rather languid faith that proceeds well only with felt devotions. My Sisters, that is not for you, since you proceed not through your senses, but through faith. You have no need to see, hear, and touch.

**The second obstacle** comes from a piety that is overly external. While good in itself, this can be an obstacle to the grace of God and to his blessing. It leaves the soul in the state of servitude, like a beggar at the door to whom we give alms so that he goes away. It lacks intimacy. Many people remain on this level. They honor our Lord with an external piety; but this is simply a deep respect. There is no intimacy of love. These souls say their vocal prayers, but they don't speak to our Lord; they don't go beyond their program. Others follow devotional practices; afterwards, they are done. If they have to stay any longer in the church, they become bored. That's external piety.

**A similar obstacle** is a piety that is too personal. Piety is too personal when we speak to our Lord only about ourselves, our work, and the things we want to do. This is like a citizen who has an audience [with a magistrate] to present a request. After he does it, he leaves. These persons are more perfect than the others, for this piety has a quality of zeal and charity. Their prayer is not mere routine. These persons are a little more perfect, but they are still in servitude. They feel satisfied if they have spoken well; but they don't listen to what the Good Lord says to them. They are good collectors and beggars; once a grace has been received, they leave, and do not grow in friendship. We are often at this level, because we talk about our sufferings only. That's good, but too personal. If we have a little charity for our neighbor, we will keep repeating the same thing. Our zeal, even an external zeal, finds its character in prayer. What happens? Once we have finished all this, we don't know what else to say. We have not placed adoration in first place – we received graces from our Lord, [but] we have not spoken to him from our heart. Piety that stops at external things, or begs for alms becomes an obstacle. We go no further. We become sleepy.

**The third obstacle** is that our love is not pure enough, not sufficiently disengaged from things, and does not go deeper to meet our Lord. It is a love that stops along the way. It loves according to the law, according to the will, according to duty. While this is good, it is the love of duty. This is not the same as

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<sup>1</sup> The french verb “gouter” could be translated as taste, savor or enjoy. It is translated here by “enjoy”

<sup>2</sup> Number 328. Trois obstacles qui empêchent de goûter notre Seigneur au très saint Sacrement.

<sup>3</sup> From the context, Father is referring to a public conference that he used to give on Thursdays. Up to now, our research has not found any sign of this instruction.

the love of devotion and the gift of self – a love that forgets itself, that, so to speak, leaves the self at the door, and enters into the very heart of our Lord – there to see him, glorify him, and bless him for himself; in a word, to live from him. That is why there are so few who enjoy our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

What must we do? If your normal practice is to begin with the senses, go further, directly to our Lord himself. If, as I was telling you the other day, you begin with his feet<sup>4</sup>, go higher. When a poor man is invited to the house of a great man or a sovereign, what does he do? He leaves his wooden shoes at the door, along with his walking stick. He does not bring these into the reception room. He enters very humbly, but he does enter. Therefore, leave all those things at the door, but do enter. My good Sisters, believe me, finish with your neighbor and with yourself, but don't begin there. **Begin by offering yourselves to our Lord, to his glory, and to his love. He deserves it.**

**Go into detail:** offer your memory, your imagination, everything. Offer yourself to his service, to make reparation, and, once you are offered, express your deep gratitude. All these acts go to our Lord first of all. Do not place yourselves first. Forget about yourselves. Begin with our Lord, and you will be very happy if you forget about yourself up to the very end. Our Lord already knows what you are going to ask him. When dazed and paralyzed, we can rely on the *Our Father, I confess to Almighty God*, and everything we know, like a person who hangs on to everything. This is the valid **prayer of the poor man**. When you can pray by formulating your own thoughts, it's one hundred times better; then you are the one adoring and praying. That's what our Lord wants. When you have enough courage – at times when you cannot pray –, remain like a dog at his feet, staying there, watching. He allows you to see with your eyes, if you can. It's magnanimous.

When states of aridity are accepted out of homage, they take precedence over the others, even ecstasy, because our Lord does everything. It is this state that honors him in his agony, in his abandonment that was his most perfect state. We join him there. We have to pass through a stone wall or through clouds in order to reach our Lord. What will happen? **We will be with him; he will show himself to us, and we will enjoy him in himself**, otherwise we will enjoy him only through an intervening grace – like fruit along with the peelings. It is better to warm yourself in the sun rather than near a fire – it is better to warm yourself near the fire of the Master, than with mere servants.

❖ Cf. **The Science of love, November 5, 1860: Book 2 B**  
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**Points for reflection:**

In your own words can you describe the obstacles to our prayer of adoration?

In this conference, St. Peter Julian presents the prayer of offering, the prayer of poverty. Describe them.

What is your experience?

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Instruction 327. *Moyens de recueillir l'imagination (Means to Recollect the Imagination)*.