

Vocation. The Hidden Eucharistic Life¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Friday, June 22, 1860

My Daughters, I see that the Good Lord is increasing your number. Surely, when the Good Lord acts in that way, he has plans of grace and mercy. What are they? Time will tell: “*Where the body is, there also the eagles will gather*”,² said our Lord (cf. Lk 17:37). In the Church what is Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament? He is the body. Our Lord’s feast is called Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. The eagles are souls. The Blessed Sacrament is everything that is most needed for these souls. They have only one life: their thoughts and affections are all in God.

This is what will happen: some will come from the north and the south to drink of the Eucharistic life; the Good Lord will send them. Where do you come from? I come from the North; I come from the South. Others from the East, and from the West. It was by accident that I heard about it, and I came. This is what happened to most of our men; it will be the same for you. We are not attracted by others – they merely announce, but do not attract. **One thing is sure: our Lord is searching and choosing those who can be completely devoted to him**, who can be only for him. He searches for them in the world – there are not many, but he is searching for them. As Jesus Christ said: *Indeed the Father seeks adorers for his Son* (cf. Jn 4:23).

We must pray: human nature dreads the Eucharistic vocation, it is only crucifixion. Fire burns. But everything changes as we enter into the spirit of our vocation, because as we enter the mystery of love and of vision, we sense that we are alive. A person may eat something bitter, but senses that it strengthens her. It is the same for someone who comes to the Blessed Sacrament: there is some bitterness and some sweetness, because God is sweetness and strength. Many are preparing to come who are more worthy than we are. The Good Lord is preparing them with very special graces. We are only the first workers: without doubt, we are honored to be foundation stones – it is an honor to start a building, but those who come after us will do better.

During my travels, I saw some beautiful souls, very pure, very devoted, from all walks of life, women, young ladies, and servants. They are suffering, because the attraction of the Eucharist is not encouraged. In most sermons, there is no Eucharistic grace. Preachers do not have it, they have not studied this form of life; they have virtues under another form. The life of the Blessed Sacrament is not preached; and so they suffer. When we can direct them in a life-giving way they feel at ease, they are nourished, they find life in their grace. I told myself: These are truly beautiful religious persons! Much time is needed... these poor people ... if they only knew that this group exists³? I was very careful not to mention it. You realize that the Society of the Fathers inspires confidence because we are with the Blessed Sacrament. If people knew that there are a few persons here, a small family near the Cenacle, everybody would come running.

The prophet says, What is better than the yeast of the just? (cf. Ps 77:24). But I tell myself: We must remain hidden. The Good Lord will do the choosing; we might choose badly. As for you, you must

¹ Number 220. *Vocation. Vie cachée eucharistique.*

² Recent translations give another meaning to this expression.

³ In other words: Souls take much time to grow because their Eucharistic attraction is not nourished. If they knew that the Society of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament existed, they would come running!

allow yourselves to be led – to be hidden in the ground⁴. Here, we are concerned with God, we are in God. Our neighbor is clearly in second place. We are at the feet of Jesus like [Mary]. The soul is at peace and at the same time there is great activity (cf. Lk 10:38-42). Look at the flame; the hearth does not move – it is on fire. The larger the hearth, the bigger the flame. The more a soul loves, the bigger its flame: the flame and the hearth are co-related. No soul is more active than the soul at the feet of our Lord. God is eternal rest and perpetual movement: he does not move, he is not agitated. But divine love is not [the same as] human love.

I know that you are happy; appreciate your vocation. But you must enter fully into the spirit of your grace. To do that you must die, [...] one thing today, tomorrow another. Our old human nature dies only when we do. It seems that it revives overnight – the Good Lord allows this to make us work. **My Sisters, be happy that your life is hidden.** The *Imitation* says that a virtue that becomes public too soon is exposed to vanity. A small flame quickly goes out. A religious group overburdened with exterior activity is quickly destroyed. When the Good Lord wants a beautiful tree, he hides the roots – when he wants a great religious body, he hides it around himself. Our Lord could have formed his apostles all at once, but he used three years to form them in a family spirit, to give them his virtues. Graces are perfect in themselves, but they are absorbed only gradually. In order to adjust to the grace of a new situation, we need time. How good is the Good Lord!

If there were outstanding social figures among you, it would be very unfortunate. If you had countesses and marquises, people would come to you and you would be known.⁵ If you came into wealth, you would no longer be daughters of the Cenacle. You might say: We have nothing more to worry about; but as it is you can be a little more grateful. May the Good Lord be blessed!

You need all these things so that you can be truly in your vocation. If you had a beautiful habit, and if you were [formally] set up, you would certainly be known. It is a great grace for you to be known only by the Blessed Sacrament. When will you become known? We must proceed according to the grace of the moment. The Hebrews never knew where they were going – a pillar, [of cloud] an angel, stayed above the tabernacle. When it rose, that was God's signal to all the people – but they never knew where they were going. When Moses, Aaron and all the people were ready, the column went ahead, always in mystery (cf. Ex 40:36-37). The column is the Eucharistic cloud – the Good Lord wants us to rest at his feet. This is difficult for our poor human nature; we want to see a little further (cf. Heb 11:8). The Good Lord does not want it. I am sufficient for you, he says. The Good Lord is our light (cf. Jn 8:12).

What is beautiful [about] the Blessed Sacrament is that it is as if we were in paradise – God is our paradise. If one is well, or another is not, if one is sick or she is not – the rule is always there. The **Eucharistic rule is that each one does her part according to what she can.** How unhappy you would be if God wanted to punish you and send you out for two weeks even in a beautiful palace! You would say: And where is my cell, my little chapel, and the Blessed Sacrament? You could not find peace there. We appreciate a gift when it is taken away. When we preach about the Blessed Sacrament, and it is during the octave, this feeds is a little. When the Blessed Sacrament is no longer there, how sad we feel!

Have courage, my good Daughters; do not look at the means, do not look at the hand [that gives]. If I were not present, the Good Lord is still (your) father. He would send an angel. Never rely on anyone, but only on the grace of God (cf. Ps 124:1). The king is there and he gives both movement and life (cf. Rv 17:28).

⁴ Like a seed

⁵ For 6 years in Paris the sisters were practically unknown.



Points for reflection:

Here, Peter Julian teaches the death-life mystery in daily life: “If the grain of wheat does not die, it remains alone; but if it dies it will bear abundant fruit.” He also teaches the importance of time and simplicity for spiritual formation. What strikes you in this text?

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