

We Must Begin Our Adoration Well ¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Friday, June 21, 1861

In our last instruction, we mentioned how to make adoration when already in a moment of fervor; but **in general the problem with our meditations, with our adorations, is the very beginning.** If we begin well, the rest will follow. I know that human weakness can arise, but we continue the way we had begun. The essential thing is to begin our work well, energetically from the first. If we begin badly, in a lukewarm way, there is much to fear that we'll have a hard time to return to where we should be, and that we might come back to our senses only at the end of prayer time. Once the direction is set and the imagination has begun to work, the heart has allowed itself to be dissipated, the blind will may simply follow, and the result is that adoration was spent wandering – it was an adoration of the body, but not of the heart. All that flows from a poor beginning.

My Sisters, since this is so important, how then should we begin? With our Lord himself, not with ourselves. If we begin with ourselves, we may go no further, since we are so concerned with our sufferings, our temptations, and our defects. Since our soul is used to this language, since we know ourselves very well, we will not want to go any further² – we will be preoccupied with ourselves. I know that we can redirect this to our Lord in adoration, but there is a great danger that we will remain simply with ourselves. We are so accustomed to keep telling the Lord that we are proud, lazy, and distracted; but that is not adoration. It is true that there might be a little humility in this, but it becomes a habit, and we stay there. The proof is that after ten or twenty years of saying this, nothing changes. This is like a sick person who keeps groaning.

Go to our Lord, that's the best way. Naturally, when we enter a house we greet the master/mistress who welcome us; we ignore the others. We don't give our first greetings to the servants. By greeting the master, evidently we are also greeting the others. We must greet our Lord first of all. How often you have done the contrary; so have I. Why? At the time, you did not know; neither did I. Today, I know: the reason is my laziness. When it is raining, we say: I will not go out, because the weather is bad. When the weather is too hot, we say: I will not go out, because it's too hot. Whenever we have to leave our own home, there's a price to pay. This is the feeling of laziness.

I make an exception, however, for an extraordinary state of suffering, temptation, or trial – that's very different. Whenever we are in a state that absorbs heart, soul and all faculties, as well as body, it is possible for us to approach God very well through this state. That is the right road, because the Good Lord has placed us there. That's the proof that he wants us to use this state in his presence, because we are so overwhelmed by this suffering, and it has become for us a center of life. What can we do? We go to our Lord through this state that he has sent us. However, in ordinary states of suffering, you can do this if you want, but you will note that you are just distracting yourself and wasting your time. In an extraordinary state, things are different. If I'm experiencing a very deep sadness, I could not rejoice, even if I wanted to. A strong temptation affects my mind, my heart, and my whole being. How can I rejoice? It's impossible.

¹ Number 330. *Il faut bien commencer l'adoration.*

² Yes, we are used to looking at ourselves and talking to ourselves; even if we refer this to God, even so we are still preoccupied with ourselves.

Or, I am struck by some mystery, the thought of it is sweet and strong. That is my entry point. The Good Lord gave it to me; he strengthens me, and I experience a certain well-being. When you experience that, you have your point of entry. Give thanks and love for what you have already received.

In the state of suffering, you can offer yourselves. With the Apostles say: *Lord, save us!* (Mt 8:25) You will not be distracted with generalities: you will be speaking your mind. You will not be distracted by talking about your suffering or your joy: love fills your heart. You might tell me: Everything is clear and simple when you talk about it, but then, afterwards, in prayer, you don't do it. I'm not telling you to think about only one thing for a whole hour. I cannot eliminate flightiness of mind, cowardice, laziness or temptation. I'm showing you the way. When things are going well, try to stay in control of yourself: from one thought you proceed to another – it's a question of entering in and remaining there. **That's always good for the three states: the grace of extraordinary attraction, of suffering, or of temptation.**

“I am in an ordinary state, neither sad, nor happy, nor tempted, nor attracted to anything special. I am a good servant: I want to do whatever the Good Lord wants. How should I begin?” Do not begin with yourself: it is useless to talk about your defects and your faults. **Begin with our Lord**, through an act of recollection, but make it an active recollection, not by means of rest. If you go to adoration to sleep, that is not the repose of St. John! What is the Blessed Sacrament? It is a fire. Does fire sleep? It is always working: when a fire goes out, it has no more life. Add the little fire that is in you to the great fire that is the Blessed Sacrament.

Active recollection. You must not be concerned with yourself, your body, and your duties; what do you expect to do by talking about all that? You are in heaven; heaven is not the place where we deal with things of earth. If you have to be concerned about yourself, you can do that at the end, not at the beginning. Adore God, with the adoration of faith – not yet with your self-offering – adoration through faith and love. You must offer to our Lord the worship of your heart, of your mind, of your whole life, and spend a good hour in praising and blessing him. The adoration of worship is the best, the one that our Lord wants. Then comes the offering, the love that petitions. Finally gratitude. We want to listen carefully to him, attend to him, and thank him for listening to you with undivided attention.

If you are ready, begin your topic in this way. If you start with one subject and the Lord leads you to stay on it, you must stay there as long as you can. The first idea is always the best. You must make a strong effort to become recollected: it would be good to experience some emotion, but you should not look for it. When everything is colored by love, it is a divine fire – body and soul feel the effects. It is as if the sun was warming us.

I noticed that when we do this rather actively, soul and body react strongly: we can proceed well for a good while, and we can return more quickly to the experience of the initial effort. **The conclusion is this: we must begin well, in order to end well.**



Points for reflection:

This instruction speaks of different ways of beginning adoration according to our state of soul: our ordinary state, our grace of attraction, or in times of suffering and temptation. Can you explain these counsels? What is your experience?