

## Avoid Monotonous Generalities. Preparation before Adoration<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Paris, Thursday, August 23, 1860

Today, I brought you a book on the Blessed Sacrament. It is one of the best that I know. Fr. Crasset is one of the best and most learned authors. Use it well. My poor Sisters, we have to glean from others when our harvest is meager. By ourselves, if God is not feeding us we run dry; we need to sustain our life – may this book help you.

The Holy Eucharist is not like other devotions that have specialized thoughts and practices, natural only to certain minds and certain mysteries. **The Holy Eucharist is the gift *par excellence*; therefore everything is linked to it.** All that you find good can be related to the Most Blessed Sacrament. That is the work of your meditation, your specialty. Your mind might not be well disposed, but you must know how to prepare it. In gold mines, all minerals contain gold – we must learn how to extract it.

Jesus Christ is in the Blessed Sacrament, and all rights are his. **When you read, do so with this Eucharistic spirit,** and you will find spiritual nourishment, you will discover the spirit of everything. Do not allow books to control you; control the books. A clever captain of a ship shows his skill by controlling the winds to bring him to his destination even in a storm. So, a Eucharistic soul can provide direction to everything. Notice a merchant selling different things; everything is directed to wealth. He manipulates everything toward this goal, to enrich himself. You must do the same for our Lord, do not be foolish by deviating from the Blessed Sacrament, but bring your grace, your vocation to everything, since you are in the service of a king. With the Blessed Sacrament, you don't need superior intelligence, like some people in the world, but you have a superior grace. That's all you need, because you serve our Lord royally.

**St. Francis of Assisi** saw all things in his grace of simplicity: he admired the beauty of nature, the singing of birds; he found joy in the whole of nature. Why can't you relate everything to the Blessed Sacrament, in order to **create unity in what you are doing?** Remain in this center, so good and beautiful. Read this book [that I brought for you]. I know that everything does not nourish your piety equally, like the hidden riches that you find in some instructions;... but, this is a very good, an excellent book. Read it carefully. It takes time to grasp a writer's style and become used to it; don't be like those who use all kinds of books. You need only one that you really appreciate.

**My poor Daughters, guard yourself against monotony and generalities in your devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.** Monotony means to go to the Blessed Sacrament with things that are so common and usual, that they no longer excite you, no longer stir in you the love of God; in a word, it is a kind of routine. You must be like the saints in heaven: always have something new in adoration, in your offering. Since you always have new graces, my poor Daughters, don't get stuck in the past. You must not act like some people who live from old memories, because our food is ever new.

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<sup>1</sup> All the instructions of this book are taken from the *Instructions to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament*, St. Peter Julian Eymard, Complete Edition, Rome, 2003. In the *Books*, certain titles have been modified to correspond better to the content of the extracts that have been retained, or again to correspond better to the idea that guided the choice of these texts. However, in footnote at the bottom of the page, we will always find the number and titles corresponding to the complete edition. This first instruction has the following number and title: 253. *Éviter la banalité, la généralité. Préparation avant l'adoration.*

**Give thanks for past graces**, but accept new ones also. A soul with an old-fashioned spirit, a spirit of the past, is not living in the present. She is like a miser, afraid of losing her money. Take advantage of the present, live in the present, and from the love of God. Be careful of vagueness and generalities in your devotion. When spent, such piety is like a container that once held an excellent liqueur and now has only a drop left revealing that there was something excellent there before. The same is true of a soul that does not feed her devotion with new energy. She has only the scent of the past, a devotion of memories, of a love that was given. We can easily become bored with vague generalities, because we are not taking care of stoking our fire with new material. The result is that we do practically nothing. Do not act in this way. That's why, when I find something good, I pass it on to you. It is too easy to dry up.

**All the large orders<sup>2</sup> have a proper method of meditation, a form of prayer** to feed their devotion. The Carthusians have a method of prayer, the Jesuits have their major method, the Sulpicians and all congregations have their own forms, special to them. You must also have your own way of prayer. What will it be? It should not be like that of the others. Is Jesus Christ going to glean from others, and go begging? We don't give anything to someone who already has everything. Where did the others get their methods? In prayer, in union with our Lord. You have much more than they have. They did not have exposition like you do. You should not ask from the servant, nor use his prayer, when you have the Master. Therefore, go directly to our Lord.

**What method?** It must come from prayer itself. That's the reason why you don't have meditations like people do in the world, like the Jesuits who have rules for prayer. You no longer pray in your room as you used to do. Why not? Because you are no longer in the world, and you don't belong to those other communities, and you are not begging any more... I call that begging. There is as much difference between your state of life and that of others, as there is between the prayer of a person on earth and that of an angel before God. You are there at his feet; you don't need someone to introduce you. What method then? You must look for it and find it. You must have one that will be your own form of prayer and love. That's what I want to develop a little more.

My poor Daughters, you are here only to be adorers. You are not here for the (Divine) Office; we would omit the Office were it in conflict with adoration. Everything accordingly is either to sustain the community or to fulfill a community exercise. **Everything is subordinated to adoration.** Therefore, you must adore well with the form and method of adoration that I will give you... not today, because I don't have time. You must have it; you must adore according to the spirit, according to the grace and virtue of your vocation... in a word, like an adorer. The effectiveness of this grace lies, of course, in your fidelity to this form of meditation and prayer.

All methods of prayer say that **you must prepare your subject.** Even the Holy Spirit said: Before prayer, prepare your soul, so that you will not be like a man who is tempting God. All the masters of the spiritual life have said, prepare the subject of meditation before going into God's presence. The reasons for this preparatory work are drawn from Holy Scripture and from our own weakness. We don't approach the king without preparing what we will say. And if we have several subjects, we put them in order, so as not to get confused in what we want to say. The richer and more important the person we speak to, the greater the need to prepare. Preparations vary. Some need to prepare more than others. A definite subject is enough for some; others need more. But, my good Daughters, we must not go before the Blessed Sacrament saying: I will take what the Good Lord gives me. I know very well that, sometimes, we can adore in poverty, like a beggar, like some poor person who falls at the feet of the Lord, but that is not the best method.

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<sup>2</sup> The major religious orders

**Prepare your adoration as you will.** Use a book, a grace of attraction, or a thought of the moment. If you do not, you are dishonest, because the Holy Spirit said: Before prayer, prepare your soul. Do not take the risk of having the door shut in your face and being told: Go and learn [...] go prepare yourself. I gave you a book; take something from it or from what you heard, or, take some thought from the *Imitation*, even just one thought. A rich person gives much, a poor person, little. But, do something [to prepare yourself].

**I am convinced that we often waste time.** A kind of monotony sets in out of habit, and we don't profit from our adorations as we should. Develop a spirit of recollection, place more importance on your adorations, live a more recollected life. If the Good Lord changes the subject, that's different. You go to him in adoration with your bouquet of flowers, you thank him; you make requests according to your grace. Then, I understand your adoration. We must prepare adoration just like meditation. In meditation, we encompass everything; encompass everything if you wish, but give everything a Eucharistic tone.



**Points for reflection:**

What means are presented here to avoid monotony in prayer? And to create unity in thought and action? What characteristic does St. Peter Julian give to define our form of prayer, and distinguish it from other methods?

What suggestions does he give to prepare adoration?