

Good Will. Safeguarding the Heart. Tenderness¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Paris, Sunday, February 21, 1864

I want to commend to your prayers a trip I will make tomorrow. I will make a foundation for adoration in a parish, so that our Lord will have good adorers. God seems to be giving me a great grace and honor by giving me to you and to my men, but I would like to live a hundred thousand years in order to evangelize the entire world. Next Sunday I'll be leaving again to make a foundation of two adoration groups in the cities of Dreux and Neufchatel. I was supposed to be here this morning, but I could not. You must understand because you are part of the family, and the family never gets upset when the father cannot do something. We must act like our Lord; we must leave disciples for other duties.

My good Sisters, you will now be received as sisters... You have been waiting for years. The desire itself is love, and love is a great suffering. This is how our Lord prepares us for heaven, so that we can be stripped of self and prepare ourselves in advance for eternal life. Desire is the means, or rather it is everything. You, my Sister, you have desired for a very long time to enjoy the grace of belonging to the Eucharist, of belonging to the family. **What is your true destination?** Not Nazareth or Bethlehem. Where then? **The Cenacle, where our Lord abides forever.** You will be consecrated to him, numbered among his angels and his servants forever. Rejoice! The price of this privilege ought to go beyond desire, even to death. Death occurs first in the heart; physical death will happen later.

What is a novice? A novice is a Sister who offers herself to the service of our Lord within the Society. She needs to possess only one quality: good will. Now the second quality is a good reputation and background, since the service to be given is for [God's] honor. As for virtues, that condition, I will not go into. I did not inquire about your degree of virtue. I know very well that no one leaves everything for the Blessed Sacrament without loving our Lord, and, when you come, you know what is involved. I have not asked you about your good works, nor about material possessions. I must confess, tell you what I love: I would like some to come here without any possessions, not even the clothes they wear, because our Lord is called the king of the poor. He was poor on the cross, but he never called himself king of the poor – after all, he owned himself. During his lifetime, his holy mother owned a house that he would inherit, and St. Joseph had tools that belonged to him. He never called himself the king of the poor. But in the Blessed Sacrament he is at our disposition, he is ours, and he is the king of the poor.

My good Sisters, you are rich. My greatest joy is to welcome someone who says, I have nothing. All I ask is, **Do you love the Good Lord?** Most will blush, afraid to reply. No one dares admit to loving the Good Lord. Even I would never dare to admit that I love God. All I say to the Good Lord is, I give you my good will. And I have never asked a potential adorer, What do you bring along? Thanks be to God, who graced us by allowing that the first five members of our Society would be poor. Even if the Good Lord sent us a Joseph of Arimathea (cf. Mt 27:57), or someone like St. Mark, who owned the Cenacle, they would be followers but not the original members. All of the first apostles, the foundation stones, were poor.

Well, we will be rich, never forced to beg for alms or to worry about the care of the Lord's service. Why? The Lord knows that to beg is to fall back on personal needs, while all of us are his servants. Whenever a gift is offered me, I blush so deeply that people think I'm full of self-love. If I had wanted wealth, I would not have come here. **All that will be asked of you is your good will**, nothing else. To serve our

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Lord in all things and in all places, dare I say it, is universal love. Love, service, above all good will, is all that is offered.

If you tell me that you are daughters of obedience, that's not what I want to hear! It is true that our Lord became obedient, as St. Paul said: *He became obedient to death, even to death on a cross* (cf. Phil 2:8). But in the Blessed Sacrament he never said that. Here he submits his will; he surrenders his body, his soul, and his divinity. Your good will is nothing else than love, love that continues to grow. Besides, believe me! Look at all the sisters who came ahead of you, who prepared the way for you, who prepared you to be of service. Look upon them as your teachers.

Do you want to be happy? Never rely on the heart or the friendship of anyone. Believe me, I've been in the ministry for thirty years. The *Imitation* says: Do you want to be happy in religious life? Look upon yourself as a stranger and a fool. My dear Sisters, to be happy, be like strangers and fools. Listen, these are harsh words. Like strangers, not in your own eyes, since the Good Lord has given you his grace. To be fools means not to care about defending yourself. This is the lowest degree of human poverty, the lowest rank. Our Lord himself was taken as a *fool, who was out of his mind* (cf. Mk 3:21), say the evangelists.

[...] **Become like strangers; let us be independent of all**, as the saints were, just to keep our heart for the Lord. This does not mean that you shouldn't be affectionate towards your sisters and respectful towards your mother. It does mean that you shouldn't seek anything purely natural and human. This is like saying that the Good Lord is not enough for you, that you need more consolation, someone else to love you. Obviously in times of trial and desolation, some relief is needed; and the Good Lord allows for this. Our Lord himself sought comfort from his apostles (cf. Mt 26:38), and shared his sorrows with his mother, **but go first to our Lord.**

A Servant of the Blessed Sacrament will never be happy until she puts her mind entirely in all she does. Her body must be in the house, her heart in the Blessed Sacrament, and her will in obedience. You are not yet fully residents. After all, you enter our chapel like everyone else. You are like the Blessed Virgin in the Cenacle, but in a place apart. You have not yet experienced the joy of living with our Lord in his house, at night, at eleven o'clock or mid-night. What a beautiful time! We tell our Lord, You are here for me, and I for you; if I were not here, you would not be here.

See all created things in the light of our Lord, who is like the sun. [...] I insist very much on that. **Women live through the heart. I want it belonging completely to the Good Lord.** That's the only thing he loves. Everything else is service. The heart is king, queen. My Sisters, ponder well this important Eucharistic thought [...] You will then be as in heaven.

As the good thief heard all the blasphemies against our Lord (cf. Lk 23:39-43), his soul went out of his body towards our Lord. He was eating and drinking him in, looking into his eyes, and our Lord was one with this good thief. A bond of love and mercy developed. If your heart is in our Lord, it is no longer in you, since he has taken it. Place your heart fully in our Lord.

I want to reproach you for something. It's my fault, since I did not tell you. During the last conference, I spoke frankly to you by saying that you are not yet adorers as I would like. You have a few initial ideas about the Society of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, about your vocation. You are beginning to learn. You don't know much about service yet, but that will come. There's one thing, however, that I hardly see in you; it's my fault, since I did not speak enough about it. I must tell you everything while we are together. I'm talking about tenderness for our Lord. You do not sufficiently consult him. You have enough good will and virtue, but you don't have tenderness. When will our Lord give this to you? Tenderness is love, tearful eyes of love. When hands and arms have become useless, the eyes can still

meet. Ah! My Sisters, **you don't have the tenderness of love in your adorations.** Perhaps the world is too critical of the gift of tears, but your heart must really become like wax. In a word, you must have tenderness.

Iron in the fire becomes soft and can be shaped in any form. The term used is that it becomes malleable. The same is true of other metals, gold, silver, and the rest. Why am I telling you this? You must open this door that our Lord may enter. You will not be complete until our Lord adds these finishing touches. If you have only the strength of virtue, you will become like soldiers! **I want you to be loving servants, not soldiers.** The olive oil is not flowing sufficiently (cf. Ps 132:2). Remember that a soul must melt to attain sweet charity in its virtues and towards the neighbor. This is my wish for you during your adorations. Begin with tenderness, and then you can end with reason if you want.



Points for reflection:

On the eve of the foundation in Angers, St. Peter Julian offers a few suggestions to the community: he recommends good will, detachment from things and persons, the safeguarding of the heart, and tenderness towards our Lord. Do you find these qualities in yourself and in your community? Give some concrete examples.