

Gracious, devoted and supernatural Charity¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Paris, Wednesday, September 1, 1858

Your charity should have three qualities: it should be supernatural, gracious, and dedicated. Our Lord told his apostles: *Love one another. Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other* (Jn 13:34). How did our Lord love his apostles? He loved them in a divine, altogether supernatural way. Your charity must then be entirely supernatural. You must love one another with a divine love. Jesus Christ should be its principle. You must love Jesus Christ in your sisters, and since our Lord does not change, your love will not change. All who love God must also love their brothers (cf. 1 Jn 4:21).

You must find your charity in Jesus Christ. Do not go to God through your neighbor, but rather go to your neighbor through God. Otherwise, your charity will vary and change according to the creature on whom you have based and founded your love. In order to express this charity in all its purity, you must divest yourself of all natural love, since that love binds, enchains, and confines you, while contradicting the love of God. Your charity must be entirely in God, so that it can supernaturalize your love for your sisters.

Your charity must also be friendly and gracious. Our Lord was gracious in all his relationships. He was respectful and never spoke an inappropriate or humiliating word. He respected all those he loved. Always respect the holiness, the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ in your sisters, his spouses. Examine your way of speaking, your relationships. You are the first ones and should give good example, so that those who join later will find in you these bonds of charity. You are the princesses of God. Everything around a king is worthy of honor. You should respect each other, because you are all spouses of the heavenly king.

The relationships of our Lord were really friendly! For his apostles, he was a father, a brother, and a friend. What care and compassion! Be friendly and gracious, since charity continues the caring love of our Lord. Your charity will always be perfect if you see our Lord in your neighbor, if you believe that our Lord considers done to himself whatever you do to the least of his servants (cf. Mt 25:40). You must allow this spirit to penetrate your whole life. You must become as though you had no body, completely spiritualized in our Lord, respecting yourselves, and keeping your friendships from anything excessive.

Your charity must be dedicated, seeing to and desiring the well-being of your sisters over your own. Our Lord never asks anything for himself, but for his apostles, even serving them himself. When they seem to lack self-confidence, he tells them: *When I sent you on mission... were you in need of anything?* (cf. Lk 22:35) Whoever has the true charity of our Lord longs for the well-being of his companions. St. Paul possessed this charity, since he was willing to suffer anathema for the salvation of his brothers (cf. Rm 9:3). **Your charity must also be full of good will,** like that of our Lord. Then you will love your neighbor with all your heart, because our Lord will be the principle of your charity.

Therefore, be sincere in your love for one another. You belong to the same family with the same spouse. My Sisters, you must go to heaven as a family. It is not sufficient to bear with one another; no, that's not enough. You must love one another. To help your neighbor is worth more than all the acts of virtue you might practice.

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Look closely at your sympathies and your antipathies. Antipathies are occasions for saints to practice heroic virtues. Avoid natural sympathies, because your charity will then be completely natural, like that of the world. That would be a great evil for you. Look closely at what is hardest for you to do, the sacrifices that you hesitate to accept, so that you can supernaturalize your heart. Our Lord said: *I have not come to bring peace, but war*² (cf. Mt 10:34). When something is difficult for you, say immediately: My God, this is for you. And you must say and do this graciously, without sadness. Humble yourself in everything.

Keep asking our Lord for the spirit of love. Pray to St. John, the disciple of love. Natural friendliness alone is meaningless, since the friendliest people in the world might be the most imperfect before God.



Points for reflection:

Notice the biblical texts that are quoted or referred to.

Share something on each of the points made in this instruction:

- a) How can your charity become supernatural, gracious, and dedicated?
- b) Look closely at your sympathies and antipathies. What resolutions will you make?

² Ravanat, variant: but *the sword*