

Joy. The Gift of the Spirit¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Angers, Friday, May 27, 1864

[...]

My dear Daughters, here is the virtue that should distinguish you in the service of God, in the words you pray every morning in the second Psalm of Lauds: ***Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands.*** And what more? *Servite Domino in lætitia – [Serve the Lord with gladness]* (Ps 99:2). Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands, sing joyfully because the Lord is your God. The character of your life is joy; sing joyfully in his presence. Why? As the prophet David says, because the Lord is your God. You are not servants who work for pay; you are not working for your own interest. Common laborers work for a salary, but only true adorers work for joy and love. This is your joy. What is that love? Everything must be done with great joy. That great joy must be evident in the way you do everything that is related to the chapel and to our Lord. Externally it is service of his body, it is charity; but here it's the divine service.

The sister who cooks must do so joyfully. You are feeding our Lord, because you are preparing food for his adorers. **Those doing other work** must do so joyfully, since you are in the service of the Good Lord. If you are not joyful, you would be mercenaries, day-laborers [...]. There would be two thrones here; one for you, and one for our Lord; two accounts; one for him, and one for you. He would not stay with you. Clearly things cannot proceed in this way; you need joy in the service of God. St. Paul said: ***May the joy of the Holy Spirit be with you always*** (cf. 1 Th 5:16; Rm 14:17). When our Lord comes to reign, he wants to reign through joy and love.

You may be asking: what about my troubles? For what concerns the body, the imagination cannot be joyful. This is where self-love begins. There may be bodily pain, some embarrassing moments, a few discomforts flowing from your service. There will also be the friction arising from the community. God allows our humbling limitations. Besides natural sufferings, which will never entirely go away, the Good Lord may send you a bit of suffering out of love, so that your time of adoration may be more precious. **True joy, however, flows from the will and gratitude.** It is independent of our frail human nature. Even when a sensitive heart weeps, it can still rejoice over everything. Your joy will not rest in yourselves but in the Good Lord. Isn't he good enough? Make only one request, not for material goods which you've already surrendered, but rather, Let me love you.

Some are afraid to enter; many in the world donate their goods – *Alms atone for sins* (cf. Sir 3:29) -- ; others do so to serve their neighbor. This is good; but are there many who love the Good Lord with their heart, and who are not afraid? People give their goods, but they don't give their minds. It's frightening. I witnessed enough religious communities where there is heartfelt love; but the gift of the body in a spirit of love only when they don't suffer. When they suffer, there is weakness and sadness. Their mind is something they want to keep – their way of seeing things and acting. In the world, that is the obstacle to the kingdom of love [...]

Notice what our Lord said – he used veiled terms and many are not able to understand – but he said: *Whoever wants to follow me must first sell his goods and leave his family, and then come and follow me; he must renounce himself* (cf. Mt 16:24; 19:21,29). To renounce oneself is nothing else than renouncing one's way of seeing things; the will is a blind faculty, but it follows the light. **Therefore, give your**

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spirit to the Good Lord, and he will give you his. What is this spirit? It is the Holy Spirit of truth and love; it is the spirit of Jesus Christ. Work hard on this. [...]

Point for reflection:

What is the character of our life? What is its motivation? What is the means to obtain it