

Our Lord God, Savior and King. To Adore, Praise, Bless and Love. The Four Acts¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Friday, February 21, 1862

My Sisters, let us continue to explain the Rule. In the last instruction we were considering adoration. The danger, in the practice² of the four ends of the sacrifice, is to surrender to the inspiration of the moment. Sometimes this inspiration is not very³ clear, not enough to keep us before the Lord. A poor soul may be waiting for manna from heaven (cf. Ex 16), but it does not come. Or if one goes to the stream, there is no stream. Go to the well, you will find water there. This means that in the four ends of sacrifice, as in the various kinds of meditation, there must be a certain order, so that we can fall back on a method to regulate our thoughts. If the Lord speaks, let go of everything, since there is no⁴ need to draw water when the Lord gives it.

My Sisters, if you are in a spirit of devotion, contemplation will be very rich, very easy, and very pleasant. You simply have to follow. But if God lets your prayer be a task, you must not start begging for some thought, not at all. You must be orderly, that's what I told you. The act of adoration centers on our Lord, the honor that he deserves as creator of all things. **There is external adoration and internal adoration.** The external is expressed by external respect of the body, prostration, posture while kneeling. I spoke of this already; I will not repeat it. Internal adoration is the homage of the heart, the sweet-smelling sacrifice of the heart (cf. Ex 29:18). Genuine adoration is above all a homage, like the homage which our Lord as man offers to the glory of God his Father.

Now, to vary the work of adoration, here are three practical thoughts.

You adore God as creator; you adore him as all powerful. He created everything, the almighty, perfect, and eternal creator, as the source of your being and of all other beings. You adore this sun of life who communicates life to all creatures. By this homage, you adore our Lord for all his creatures that have no reason and love. You adore our Lord for the millions of beings that cannot adore him, and that don't praise him as well as you because they have no understanding of things – theirs is a homage of nature, not of free will. That is why at morning Lauds we recite the beautiful canticle *Benedicite* – ***Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord*** (Dn 3:57[52-90]). We humans praise God for them, since they cannot. That is also why, in the *Laudate* — [*Praise*] the prophet David invites all creatures to praise the Lord (Ps 148).

Do not stop there; adore our Lord as savior. Creation was a great benefit, but, as the Church says, it would have been useless, if we had not been redeemed. Adoration of our Lord as creator is very good; but pass on quickly to the redemption. Your adoration will find something more perceptible and heart warming; adore him as his redeemed people. Adore him as your savior; review the mystery of the

¹ Number 394. Notre Seigneur Dieu, Sauveur et Roi. Adorer, louer, bénir, aimer. Les quatre actes. Explication de la règle, Chap. III, Art. 7. Suite. (Our Lord God..... Explanation of the Rule, Chapter III, Art. 7, Continued.)

² Guillot and (S7bis) begin in this way: Il y a un danger, *mes filles*, dans l'exercice (There is a danger, *my daughters*, in the practice)

³ Guillot and (S7bis), variant: pas assez claire (not clear enough)

⁴ Guillot and (S7bis), variant: n'a plus besoin (no longer need)

redemption. As soon as we recall this, the light of the moment will inspire you with the act that you should make.

Then, adore our Lord as king. Here he is king of love, with a court of angels. He has two thrones: one can be seen only by the angelic and heavenly court; we don't see it. He is there as in heaven, performing no miracles for us to see. It is enough that we know he is there. But his Eucharistic court is for us. Here he is a humble king; he has veiled his glory so that we will see only his love. Our Lord would have wanted to place a heart on this throne of love, but we cannot do that: we cannot place a living heart on the altar. The power of the priest does not go that far. We merely fabricated a throne of wood, and everything beautiful that we could find. Place your own heart there, then consider the love of our Lord in the Eucharist, consider all that his love made him do to come down to us. See the creative love of our Lord in his sacramental state. There's enough material there to inspire all the acts in the world.

With these three thoughts you reach all the qualities of our Lord: you must see him as God, as savior, and as king of hearts. With these three ways, you can be busy for three-quarters of an hour, if you are touched.

Or else, if you prefer to make three acts of adoration, you can adore our Lord with the heavenly court of heaven. I'm speaking only of adoration: that of heaven is perfect. If you want to adore, you know how this is done in heaven: unite yourself to the heavenly court. *They begin by prostrating themselves,* as you read in Revelations, *throwing down their crowns before the throne of our Lord, and giving thanks for all they had received* (cf. Rv 4:10); our Lord has given them everything they have. That is the adoration of homage, returning to our Lord everything that he did⁵. This eternal crown that you will wear is placed at the feet of our Lord: he is the one who has accomplished all that you have done and all that you want to do (cf. Is 26:12). This homage is most pleasing to our Lord: do it well as you begin. If you don't, you will not be in the right order of things. You will do violence to grace. Give: giving is the end. If you give only the things you have, what are you doing? Offer yourself; give yourself.

What are the saints doing in heaven? Not satisfied with adoring our Lord, they praise and bless him. What are they praising? His holiness, his glory, and his entire life. This is nothing else than a review of everything before their eyes: they praise everything in our Lord. Praise means to exult, to glorify a person. You cannot praise God in heaven; for you are not there. You praise God in the Eucharist – where you are. This act is very pleasing to our Lord. You do not center on yourself. Whenever we can disappear in this act it is perfect and divine: the glory goes to our Lord. Understand clearly, also, that if the saints were not praising God in heaven for his glory, his honor, and all his works, as the prophet says, what would they be doing? You also understand that the saints and the twenty-four elders do more than adore; they praise his glory, and they do many things that we don't know. In heaven there is no resting as on earth. They are always giving; in heaven, divine life is always acting and always resting.

What else are the saints doing? They bless God. This blessing is concerned especially with his goodness and splendor, because he is good in himself, and he has been good for them. That is what the saints are doing. You cannot bless him in heaven, since you are not yet there. For what do we bless him? For having instituted the Eucharist; you already know much about that. Contemplate in Eucharist all his graces, all his virtues; bless him as you see the light. Bless him for his goodness; bless him for his love and for his wonderful works. What will you say? Embrace all his qualities, and all his divine and human attributes; there's much that you can say. If you mix up everything, you will be finished in one

⁵ From Guillot and (S7bis): tout ce qu'il a fait, (everything that he did) instead of S7bis: tout ce qu'on a fait (everything that we did)

minute. Then consider love: after having praised his splendor and power, and blessed his goodness, you can say: To think that you have done⁶ all this for me!

The eternal Word has been journeying towards our human race since all eternity through his prophets and through all his creatures. This is the fourth act, love, after adoration, praise and blessing. It is a love that is as great as his light. Our Lord is like a flame in this great hearth. Love knows no order – it is inspiration that we follow. That is love. When a fire goes out, we stir it and a new flame comes forth. Love stirs the fire under the ashes. Love comes and revives everything.

There is another method of adoration that is simpler. It is good to diversify each day according to inspiration. One day, adore through the three theological virtues and the act of contrition. Adore through faith by adoring our Lord who is hidden. I often make this act of adoration. Our Lord is veiled in humility. For whom? For me: it's really too much. Then comes the act of trust. So much glory, splendor, and power can be frightening. One tends to run away. You are so good, you are there for me. Why be afraid? Trustingly, we find new life and move towards our Lord. You are there for me: that is the act of love. And you are doing everything for me, who deserve so little. That's contrition. There you have the four acts. Another way is more elaborate: the mind goes wandering around in heaven – in adoration the mind also has something wonderful to say to the heavenly court: I'm doing as much as you. The most ordinary way is this one: the four acts. If you are comfortable with it, remain there.

Listen well to what I'm saying. Adore our Lord with the thought that you have, especially if it is clear and definite. The grace of the moment is an expression of it. If there is nothing, then draw water from the well. Work hard: when the Good Lord sees that you are drawing water from the spring, he will end up giving you some. You must not say: I will make my five⁷ acts, if the Good Lord wants to show you a shorter way. Do not complain: if you wanted to take the main road, and you led me by a much shorter path. Do not do that, set aside your old rags and wooden shoes when our Lord covers you with his royal mantle. When he takes you by the hand and sits you at his table, go and eat. **As a general rule, follow the inspiration of the grace of the moment; when you don't have any, then make it come.**



⁶ Guillot and (S7bis), variant: *fait tout cela* (done all this)

⁷ Above, he mentioned only four acts. This might be a mistake of the copyist, but it is also possible that Father was referring to the five acts of the Ignatian method that he must have previously explained, because in the instruction 462. *The five acts*, he tells the Sisters that he will again explain this method, even if he had already done it. Not only does he explain it here, but he will explain it again at greater length in instruction 617. *Method for the examen and communion*.

Points of reflection:

This instruction emphasizes the rich notion of adoration. We can enter through several doors. Have you sufficiently explored this richness? Does it sufficiently influence your prayer, your life?